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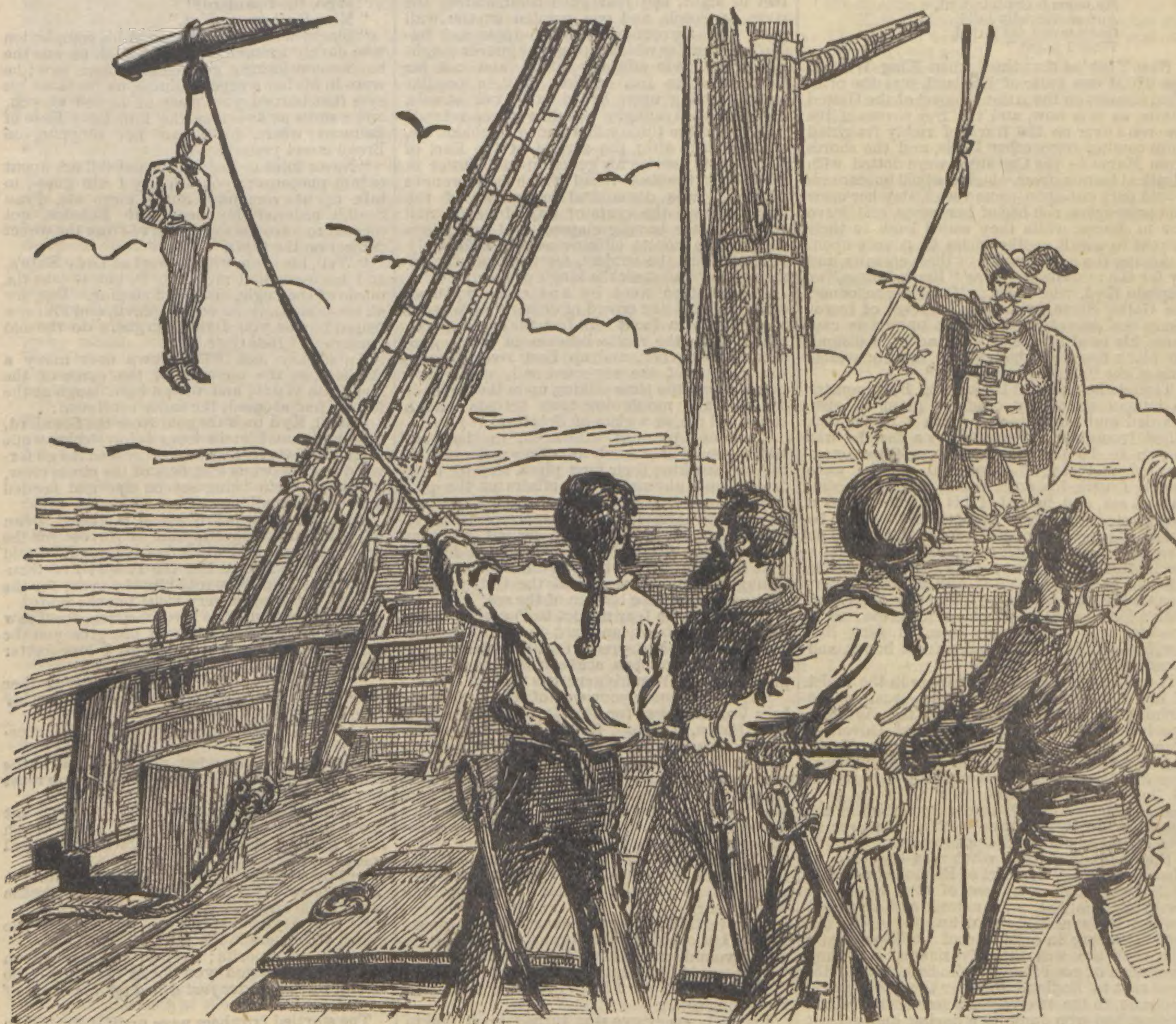
No. 116

BLACK PLUME, The Devil of the Sea; or, The Sorceress of Hell Gate.

A Romance of New York and its Waters in the "Days of Captain Kyd."

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF "MERLE, THE MUTINEER," "MONTEZUMA, THE MERCILESS," "FREELANCE, THE BUCCANEER," "THE DARE DEVIL,"
"THE CRETAN ROVER," "THE PIRATE PRINCE," ETC., ETC.



"IS THERE ANOTHER MAN ON BOARD THIS SCHOONER WHO DARES NOW DOUBT THE HONOR OF CAPTAIN KYD, PIRATE THOUGH HE BE?"

Black Plume, THE DEVIL of the SEA; OR, The Sorceress of Hell Gate.

A Romance of New York and its Waters in the
"Days of Captain Kyd."

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "CAPTAIN KYD," "MONTEZUMA,
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TINEER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. CAPTAIN KYD.

THE Nieuwe-Amsterdam of the olden time!
The New York of the present day!
What a change have not two centuries made,
and what a total metamorphosis from the
then and the now of the Imperial city of the
Western World.

And it is of the past, not the present, that I
would write; of the days when our ancestors
spoke in a strange tongue, wore knee-breeches,
smoked long pipes, and were quaint specimens
of the *genus homo*, compared with the people
of to-day; but then another century or two may
make us old-fashioned and behind the times, to
those who live when our moss-grown tombs are
looked upon as relics of an almost forgotten
age; ay, will be gazed upon sacredly and with
wonder, as we now gaze upon the crumbling
head-stones in Trinity church-yard.

To New York in 1698, two hundred and
six years after the discovery of America by
Columbus, and back through the mists of one
hundred and eighty-two years from the present
time, I would have my kind reader accompany
me, and mingle in the thrilling scenes and ro-
mance of that period that "tried men's souls"—
the age of chivalrous adventure, of witchcraft,
of "Kyd," that famous King of the Black Flag,
whose name has come down to us stained with
crime, and of whom it is sung:

"My name is Captain Kyd,
As I sailed, as I sailed.
My name is Captain Kyd,
And so wickedly I did,
God's laws I did forbid,
When I sailed."

New York at that time, when King William
the Third was ruler of England, was the prin-
cipal seaport on the Atlantic coast of the United
States, as it is now, and the free rovers of the
sea were ever on the track of richly freighted
ships coming from other lands, and the shores
from Maine to the Carolinas were dotted with
piratical haunts, from which the bold buccaneers
would dart out upon some vessel, slay her crew
and passengers, rob her of her cargo, and leave
her in flames, while they sailed back to their
retreat to await another prize to pounce upon.

Among the most famous of these corsairs, and
by far the most daring, was "Black Plume," or
Captain Kyd, who in his swift-sailing schooner,
the Galley Slave, had caused a reign of terror
along the Atlantic, and by his numerous cap-
tures, his hard-fought battles, and the dismay
his black flag caused, had won the unenviable
title of the "Curse of the Coast."

Though he was said by some to be a monster
in human shape, by others a giant in size,
bearded and hideous, and again a negro, that
killed from love of cruelty, by a few he was
known to be far different from these exag-
gerated pictures of him, and which were
sketched with his cruel deeds, wonderful com-
bats at sea, and hatred of his fellow-men as a
background. By those few he was known to be
a man of superb physique, a face as beautiful as
a woman's, and a heart as bellicose as Satan's; a
fascination of manner, that was irresistible
when he chose to assume it, and a courage that
was sublime, for he knew no fear; he controlled
with a look as wild a set of spirits as ever went
howling into Hades; and was, in fact, like
Lucifer—a fallen Angel, fallen from honor, and
become a splendid Devil.

It was at the time that Kyd was in the midst
of his depredations, upon the sea-coast in the
vicinity of New York, that King William
appointed Richard, Earl of Belmont, Governor
of what was then the Province of New York,
and so great was the dread of this noted buc-
caneer chief, who would even run into the harbors
of Boston, Newport and New York by day,
that special instructions were given the English
nobles, to use every means within his power to
free the waters of the fearful scourge.

Understanding fully what was expected of
him by his king, the Earl of Belmont had built
at his own expense, a vessel of rare speed and
sea-going qualities, and armed and equipped
her for the special duty of hunting down the
pirate, placing in command of the Bloodhound
(for such she was fittingly named) a young
American of good family, who had, as a youth,
been sent to England to enter the Royal navy,
and who, in the twelve years sea-service he had
known, had won fame as a daring and gallant
officer.

For the reader to more fully understand the

scenes and incidents in this romance of an
"over true tale," as they develop, I will give
an idea of the New York of that day, when
Maiden Lane, now the very heart of down-town
business, was the "out-of-town retreat," where
the young girls were wont to meet their lovers
and stroll by moonlight down to the green
shores of East river, then known as Salt river.

The Governor's mansion, known as the
"White Hall," stood to the east of the Rondeel
or Battery, at the foot of Broadway, and was
half hidden amid the grand old trees that sur-
rounded it.

The grounds sloped down to the edge of the
water—the Hudson river—a park of several
acres was to the west, and the old stone man-
sion, with its "stoopes," gable ends, turret
chimneys, court and wings, was a very massive
and imposing edifice, and held as much solid
comfort within its thick walls as could be found
in an English castle.

Above what is now known as Wall street, and
from which it took its name, a wall extended
across from the Hudson to East river, ten feet
in height, and thoroughly ball-proof; on Broad-
way—then a country road leading to King's
Farm, which extended to the present Canal
street—a massive gateway gave egress and in-
gress to the citizens.

At each end of the wall was a fort, and an-
other at the Battery, then called The Ledge.

The docks of New York were then at the foot
of *Here Graft*, now Broad street, and which
was at that time the principal thoroughfare of
the city, where, on pleasant afternoons, the
belles and beaux of that quaint age promenaded
as now do those of the present day on upper
Broadway and the avenues.

William and Pearl streets were then the
abodes of the fashionable and wealthy citizens,
and the Bowling Green of to-day was the mar-
ket site then, surrounded by a square bordered
with locust trees, while just below it, and front-
ing the river, was the *Stadt Huys*, or State
House, with the colonial prison occupying the
basement story.

The gates of the city were of solid oak, iron-
studded, and the citizens were the guards,
opening and closing them at sunrise and sunset.

The fort at the south of the city was twenty
feet in height, had four guns commanding the
river approach, and one pointed at the wall
gate, while surrounding it were apple and lin-
den trees, under which the valiant guards sought
rest from their military labors, and not far
away was the Inn of Jost Stall, a popular
resort opening upon Broad and Lock streets,
and where the hungry could ever get refresh-
ments, and the thirsty find a mug of golden ale.

A few days after the arrival of the Earl of
Belmont, to assume his gubernatorial duties in
New York, the fleet vessel which had brought
him over was dispatched in pursuit of the
Galley Slave, the craft of Captain Kyd, and
several weeks having elapsed, and no tidings
coming, the honest citizens were considerably
nervous upon the subject, fearing that the fa-
mous rover had sunk the king's cruiser.

As the days went by and still no cruiser
came, a Babel-like crowd of citizens were wont
to assemble in front of Jost Stall's inn, and,
seated upon the rustic benches in front, gaze
down the harbor, and up East river, hoping
for a sight of the expected sail, while they
passed away the time talking upon the topics of
the day and moistening their throats with a
can of old ale, or a glass of *Scheitum*.

Upon one pleasant afternoon, in the year
1698, a crowd of citizens were thus assembled at
the Inn, smoking their long pipes, sipping their
drinks, and discussing the affairs of the pro-
vince, the new Governor, the growth of their
city of New Amsterdam, and more particularly
the stagnation to business, caused by that
Curse of the Coast, Black Plume, and hoping
that Captain Clement St. Vane in the swift-
sailing Bloodhound had sent the Galley Slave
of the corsair to the bottom of the sea.

"I ish mocche fear me dot te Puccaneer hash
got te Floodhound, and not te Floodhound te
Puccaneer," volunteered a fat old Dutch burgh-
er, with an ominous shake of his head and a
puff of smoke from his generous mouth.

"There are more your way of thinking, Myn-
heer Van Bokelen, for The Kyd has a compact
with Satan, 'tis said, to live so many years,
after which he will be captured and strung up
on the gallows," answered a tall, fine-looking
young sailor, just returned from a foreign
cruise, and a guest at the Jost Stall Inn, and
who had the superstitious feeling of his class at
that time; in fact, the seamen of to-day are by
no means free from superstition.

"I ish hear me tat The Kyd was burn a Pipples
(Bible) upon his capstan, ant dat only a silver
pullit ish pe ables to kill him," said another
worthy burgher.

"He certainly bears a charmed life, mess-
mates; but one day he will get to the end of his
rope," volunteered a Long Island skipper.

"He would blow up his trim craft before he
would be taken, for I know the man," remarked
the young sailor.

Instantly every eye was turned upon him in
admiration and surprise, while Mynheer Von
Bokelen asked:

"Ish he a plack man, ash ish salt?"

"No."

"He ish ten feet tall, I ish hear peoples say;
ish dat so, mynheer sailor-mans?"

"No, he is neither black nor a giant, but the
handsomest man I ever saw, and I know, for I
was for months on his vessel."

The honest Dutch burghers drew themselves
slightly aloof from the young sailor, that by
his own confession, had sailed with a man
who received his commission from the Devil.

"Spin us the yarn, messmate, for you don't
look like one who was a bloody pirate at heart,"
spoke up the Long Island skipper.

"Yas, give ush te story; Mynheer Frau Stall,
a mug of ale here for mynheer sailor-mans to
wash the copweeps from hish t'roat," called
out Mynheer Von Bokelen, always glad to hear
a story.

"I'll spin the yarn if you wish it, gentlemen,
though I have no pleasant recollections con-
nected with it."

"It was in the West Indies, over half a year
ago, that I was skipper of a small craft running
out of Kingston, and one day received a call
from a young and handsome Spanish Don, a
rich planter, who told me he wished to charter
my craft to go down the coast and back."

"As he offered a large sum of gold I con-
sented, and we set sail at night, and, under the
guidance of a copper-colored native, ran into a
small cove on a lonely part of the coast, and, to
my surprise and alarm, found ourselves under
the guns of a vessel I knew but too well as the
Galley Slave of The Kyd."

"There was no chance to run, and the Span-
iard then told me that he had come at the re-
quest of Kyd, who sent him word by the In-
dian, that he had in his power his lady-love,
taken from her home on the coast some days
before, and that he demanded ransom for her."

"Well, we boarded the pirate craft, and a
trimmer one isn't in the Royal navy, and we
went before Kyd, and the Spaniard told why
he had come, and that he had brought with him
the twenty-five thousand pesos demanded for
the young lady's ransom—"

"Ant wash he plack?" asked Mynheer Vander-
hooten.

"Who, the Spaniard?"

"Mine Got! no, te Kyt."

"Black! not a bit of it, though his complexion
was darkly bronzed, and, as I said, he was the
handsomest-looking gentleman I ever saw; he
wore in his hat a superb plume, as black as his
eyes that burned you, when he looked at you,
and a smile as sweet as the fair Lady Kate of
Belmont wears, for I saw her shopping on
Broad street yesterday—"

"Never mint te Lady Kate, put tell ush apout
te tam puccaneer; you ish dry I vill guess, to
talk apout vomans. Some more ale, Frau
Stall," ordered Mynheer Van Bokelen, not
pleased to have the story swerve from the direct
subject on the *tapis*.

"Well, his smile was as sweet as Lady Kate's,
and his voice had music in it, but it was the
music of the bugle, clear and ringing. But, for
all his sweet smile he was the devil, and his crew
feared him as you Dutch burghers do the old
Sorceress of Hell Gate."

An uneasy look was thrown over many a
shoulder, at the mention of the name of the
Hell Gate Witch, and with a light laugh at the
fear he had aroused, the sailor continued:

"Well, Kyd took the gold from the Spaniard,
and then sent him in irons below decks, while
myself and three men were ordered to go for-
ward and report as members of the pirate crew,
my little *goleta* being set on fire and headed
seaward with all her canvas up."

"Messmates, it nearly broke my heart, I can
tell you; but I forgot myself in sorrow for the
poor Spaniard and his lady-love, for Kyd told
her he would release her for twenty-five thou-
sand pesos, and she wrote him the order for the
money, for she was very rich; but she said:

"I know you have my lover, too, for I saw
him come aboard, and I will not give you the
money, unless you give me him I love better
than all else in the world."

"Would you have his heart, lady, rather
than the heart of any one else in the world?"
asked Kyd, in his sweet way.

"I would," she answered, and then the buc-
caneer said:

"I will give you what you love best in the
world, and release you too; but first, you must
dine with me here."

The maiden promised, and the two sat
down to a splendid dinner, of luxuries taken
from many a vessel, and then, when the meal
was over, she said:

"Now fulfill your pledge, Captain Kyd."

"I have done so," he answered, with the
sweet smile on his face.

"Would you deceive me, Senor Kyd?" she
asked, with tears in her beautiful eyes.

"Ah, no, senorita; I repeat it. I have given
you what you said you loved best in all the
world, for, you have just dined off the heart of
your lover."

The startled burghers were upon their feet in
holy horror, while Mynheer Von Bokelen ex-
claimed:

"Mein Got von Deutch-lant! she wash eat her lover's heart?"

"It is true, gentlemen, and she went raving mad from that day, and soon after died and Kyd had her buried; he dressing up as a priest and reading the service; and more, he went into Kingston himself and drew the gold on the young girl's order."

"And how ish it dat you wash not kilt, myn-heer?" asked a rubicund-faced Dutchman.

"Oh, I slipped overboard one night when running down the coast of Cuba, and escaped;" and, after a long glance seaward the young and exceedingly handsome sailor walked away, with a polite bow and cheery:

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen."

"I ish believe dat story—to pe one pig lie," said Mynheer Von Bokelen, as soon as the sailor was out of earshot; but before further comment could be made by any one, there suddenly appeared in their midst a personage whose unexpected and undesired coming caused universal consternation, while the cry arose on all sides:

"The Witch! the sorceress of Hell Gate!"

CHAPTER II.

THE SORCERESS OF HELL GATE.

THE sudden, and certainly unlooked-for presence of the one most feared by all the honest burghers, and in fact held in holy awe by four-fifths of the citizens of New York, caused an instantaneous and rapid retreat, Mynheer Von Bokelen upsetting the table before him, in his fright; and with a desire to make a hasty exit from the scene, cans of ale were overturned, benches and chairs knocked down, and a general feeling of consternation pervaded all.

And the cause of this apprehension was a woman, yet a strange one, for there was a certain gleam in her fierce black eyes, of a joy in hatred, and pleasure in misery.

Her hair was snow-white and hung down her back far below her waist; her face was bronzed and seamed by exposure, and her form was slight, wiry, and her movements rapid, for one whose head seemed frosted by three-score years; and yet, gazing upon her closely, the observer would have felt that she was fully twenty years younger than a casual glance caused her to appear, for her teeth were perfect and as white as milk, her arms well rounded, her figure gracefully molded, and her eyes as bright as a maiden's of seventeen.

Her feet were small, and she wore sandals instead of shoes, and her attire was a strange one, for her short black skirt, was embroidered with strange devices, while a scarlet cloak over her shoulders was ornamented with bats, birds' wings, snake-skins, and in the center of the back were skillfully worked with white beads, a skull and crossbones.

A year before, she had appeared suddenly in New York, coming from, no one knew where, and proclaiming herself a witch, she was at once shunned by every honest person, and the worthy burghers of the town having forbidden her to dwell in their midst, she had selected as her abode a lonely cabin, once the house of an Indian medicine man, and who had one night been murdered, though by whom no one could tell.

Since then the place had been believed to be haunted by the Indian's spirit, and being on a rocky island, washed by the wild waters of Hell Gate, it was in unison with her weird character, and a spot where she could perform her unholy rites unmolested by any one.

It was not long before the fame of the old Witch spread far and wide, and ill winds were attributed to her, as were other evils that befell the dwellers in the town, and Zebel, the Sorceress of Hell Gate, became a power in the land, for those who desired to commit some fell crime sought her aid, as did others who wished fair winds, a prosperous voyage, a return of affection from a loved one; and, in fact, the good besought her to help them in their good deeds, and the evil in their wicked acts.

Once each week she came into the town, sailing, or rowing there in her light skiff, the sides of which were carved with diabolical figures of all kinds, and though the boys were wont to steal the boats of fishermen for a row on the river, that of Zebel the Sorceress was religiously left alone.

Having described the Sorceress of Hell Gate, and shown the reader in what dread she was held, it will be more readily understood why her sudden coming into the midst of the patrons of the Jost Stall Inn was received with such dire apprehension as to quickly disperse the outer circle of the crowd, while those who had already fallen under her black, wicked eyes, wished piously that they had not been tempted from their homes.

"Ye ale-sops and fat idlers, what are ye discussing so glibly in safety here, when ye should be on the seas hunting down the bold buccaneers whose deeds frighten you into nightmares whenever your eyes are closed?" she said in harsh, insolent tones, throwing her eyes over the crowd.

"Goot Zebel Vitch, vill you vas have a can o' peerf?" asked a fat Dutchman in a timid tone; but he shrunk back at the look she gave him for his temerity.

"Not with ye, thou ale-pot, for, gulping ale only, ye have only the courage of mice, and fear verily your own shadow. Here, Frau Stall, give me a can o' thy best Island spirits, for I am athirst," and the Sorceress threw herself down before a table and the good frau of the Inn placed before her the fiery beverage, saying kindly:

"Frau Zebel, t'ou needn't pay me notings: tou ish welcome."

"I take no favors, woman! Here is thy pay," and she threw a piece of gold upon the table, which Frau Stall, with trembling fingers, proceeded to change, and when she had done so, hastily retreated into the tap-room, where Mynheer Von Bokelen was peeping from behind the door at the Sorceress.

"Mynheer Von Bokelen, canst change me a guilder?" she asked, handing him the gold piece.

"Yes, Frau Stall, I vill mit pleasure," and the old Dutchman made the change, little dreaming the gold had come from the purse of the Sorceress.

The Frau walked away, muttering to herself: "It ish hart, but Mynheer Von Bokelen ish rich mans, and I don't vant no ill fortunes to mine house."

The Sorceress had in the mean time quaffed her spirits, and, unmindful of the crowd gazing in awe upon her, turned her eyes down the bay.

"There is a sail in the offing," she said, slowly.

"Thou hast good eyes, Dame Zebel, to see a vessel on yonder water, other than the fishing-smacks," said the Long Island skipper.

"Te Vitch Vomans can see mooch more t'an ve peoples," volunteered a burgher, anxious to curry favor by a compliment.

"Ye are all a set of blind idiots—see, yonder rounding Staten Island, do you not behold a vessel? Ay, and 'tis *The Kyd*."

A howl of horror went up from the crowd, and many hastily sped homeward, for the Sorceress and *The Kyd* in one day and at the same time, was more than Dutch courage could stand.

But others remained, and every eye was strained at the strange vessel, which had now swept out of the shadow of the land, and was heading up toward the city under a cloud of canvas, which the last tints of the sun, going down beyond the Jersey hills, caused to look like red sails instead of white.

Instantly all was excitement in the town, and the citizens, whose duty it was to act as guards that day, ran in haste to the three forts, the city gate was closed, and consternation reigned supreme, for more eyes than those of the Sorceress of Hell Gate recognized the well-known and dreaded vessel of *The Kyd*.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO MAIDENS.

AT the time of the discussion in front of the Jost Stall Inn, and the unwished for coming of Zebel the Sorceress, there were two maidens seated in the large upper window of the Governor's mansion, gazing out upon the waters of Hudson river, and occasionally down the bay, as though watching for a returning sail that might bring back some loved one to them.

Were a person asked which of the two was the most beautiful, either in form or face, it would have been hard to decide, for both were perfect in symmetry of figure, though one was a trifle taller than the other, and their features were molded strangely alike, though the one was a brunette, the other a blonde.

And in their veins flowed kindred blood, for Lady Kate of Castle Cor was the only daughter of the Earl of Belmont, and the Lady Grace of Greyhurst was the niece of the noble Governor, and his ward.

In going to his new home in the Western World, the Earl of Belmont had taken with him his family, excepting his son, a haughty young sailor who had given up the sea shortly after coming of age, to settle down as the master of Castle Cor, where freed from the restraint of his parents, he could indulge his luxurious and dissolute tastes to his heart's content.

But the countess, her daughter and her niece, had accompanied the earl to New York, and once located in the grand old gubernatorial mansion they did not regret giving up Castle Cor for it, for all was strange to them in the new world, and as warm hearts beat there as in the Emerald Isle, their old home and native land.

Coming over in the *Bloodhound*, whose young American commander had done all in his power to make their voyage a pleasant one, and no news having been received of the cruiser, since her departure in search of the terrible *Kyd*, it was no wonder that the two maidens felt anxiety for the fate of the dashing captain, Clement St. Vane, and feared that ill fortune had befallen him.

And yet the anxiety was not alone for the captain, but for another, and, strange as it may seem, that other who excited the sympathetic regard of those noble ladies, was the pirate *Kyd*.

Why, in their hearts rested a feeling of pity for one whose crimes were known over the

wide world, and who had become famous as the Curse of the Coast these pages will develop.

"Kate, do you not see a tiny sail yonder in the lower bay! there! just off Sandy Hook?" asked Lady Grace of Greyhurst, pointing in the direction referred to.

"No, cousin mine, I fear your hope causes you to picture in your eyes what you hold in your heart, and—"

"No, no, Kate, you mistake me, and so do your father and mother, for I do not love Clement St. Vane, as you all believe, and, as I think, you would have me do.

"He is noble by nature, comes of a fine American family, it is said, and a braver man does not live; I respect, admire, but do not love him," said Lady Grace, earnestly.

"Then why all this anxiety regarding his sweet Grace?" asked Kate of Belmont, slyly.

Lady Grace remained silent, and Lady Kate continued archly:

"When in coming over we sighted the sail, which all pronounced the *Galley Slave* of *Kyd*, you were fearfully anxious that we would have an action, and it was not for yourself, as you fear nothing, sweet cousin; and when, for some reason I could not understand, *The Kyd* did not attack us, your face was radiant with joy, and I felt assured that you thought more of Captain St. Vane escaping danger, than you feared for yourself, my mother and I."

"You were wrong, Kate."

"And since we went on board the cruiser, and the *Bloodhound* returned in pursuit of *Kyd*, you have not had a happy moment, while in the action, when the pirate eluded St. Vane in the storm and attacked us, you showed not half the anxiety you had before; you must confess, cousin, if not in love with Clement St. Vane, your actions look as though you were, and actions speak louder than words at times."

A troubled expression rested upon the beautiful face of Lady Grace, and she patted her little foot nervously for awhile, and then said, while her cousin seemed to enjoy her confusion:

"Kate, I admit that your words *seem* true; but to you, that I may not appear unmaidenly in my anxiety regarding Clement St. Vane, I will say that I hold a secret in my heart that I have kept locked up for two years."

"Why, Grace, how solemn you look! What can you mean?" asked Lady Kate, impressed by the strange manner of her cousin.

"Kate, I meant not to tell any one the secret I know, and which is known but to one other; but I will tell you."

"And who is that other, Grace?"

"Zebel, once the Witch of Castle Death in old Ireland, and now the Sorceress of Hell Gate."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECRET.

WHEN Lady Grace mentioned the name of Zebel the Sorceress, the dreamy eyes of Lady Kate opened wide, and she said, with a shudder:

"You, Grace, a secret in common with that fearful creature, whom, after leaving Ireland, I hoped never to hear of again?"

"Yes, Kate; she holds the secret with me; and more, she is here, as I said."

"It cannot be that the Sorceress of Hell Gate, whom we hear so much of, is old Zebel, the Witch of Castle Death?"

"It is true, though; they are one and the same, for I have seen the Sorceress, and recognized her at a glance, as who could fail to do, who had once set eyes on her?"

"Then her presence here in America means evil. I almost wish, though it is wicked to say so, that the peasants had burned her as a witch, when they set fire to the old castle to drive her out."

"She had already fled, Kate, and upon inquiry, I find she has been here a year, and has a home on an island washed by the mad waters these New Yorkers call Hell Gate."

"Ugh! I shudder when I think of her, and I hate her, oh! so deeply, Grace, for I believe that she murdered poor Kenton Cavanaugh."

"You wrong her there, cousin mine—stay! hear me through, and you shall know all; but if I wound you, pardon me, Kate, for to no one else would I tell what I have discovered, and that is, that, since you were a little girl, you have loved Kenton Cavanaugh."

"Lady Grace!" and Lady Kate was on her feet, an angry flush upon her face; but her cousin met her gaze firmly, and she again resumed her seat, while she said in an injured tone:

"You forget, Lady Grace, that Kenton Cavanaugh was a fisher-lad, and my father's huntsman, while he was as humble as a peasant."

"I forget it not, any more than I forget that he was the handsomest boy I ever saw, was devoted to you when you were in short dresses, and put all the young nobles to blush, as their superior in horsemanship, archery, and as a daring sailor, while his old father taught him so well, that he had by far a better education than our own peers. No, no; I have forgotten nothing, cousin mine, not even that he saved your life from that ferocious stag, and when your accepted lover, Lord Manly Meredith, struck

him with his whip, from sheer jealousy, that he hurled the noble to the ground, as he would a child."

"I remember all, Grace, without recalling those scenes," said Lady Kate, sadly.

"Then why show anger when I say that you love Kenton Cavanaugh, who, in the few weeks he was on board the king's cruiser, rose to a lieutenantcy, and whom your own father invited to Castle Cor as his guest?"

"Grace, Grace, an you love me say no more, for—"

She paused, and buried her face in her hands, and Grace went on:

"I read your secret, Kate, and I honor, not condemn you for it, as you, noble as you are, have a heart like other women."

"I pitied you, when your brother, Lord Gerald, insulted Kenton Cavanaugh by calling him our groom, when we rode to Death Castle under his escort that day, and I pitied you far more, when, since the night he went to the old ruin, to keep his promise to Zebel the Witch, that you never knew what fate befell him."

"Grace, I know you are a dear good cousin, and I love you more than all else; but I will worship you, if you tell me that Kenton Cavanaugh is not dead."

All the haughty reserve of the maiden had gone; her warm heart had broken the icy barrier that she had kept before it to the world's gaze, and she dropped on her knees and buried her proud head in her cousin's lap.

"Kate, Kenton Cavanaugh is not dead."

Around the neck of Lady Grace the fair arms of Kate of Belmont were entwined in a fond embrace, and she cried joyously:

"My own sweet cousin, thank you for those words, for, to you now I confess the truth of all you have said: *I do love him.*"

For full a moment Lady Grace made no reply, and her cousin glanced up into her face, and asked:

"What have you to say, Grace, to my secret?"

"That it were better had he died, as all believed, that night in Castle Death."

In an instant Lady Kate was upon her feet, her face pale, her eyes flashing now, as she asked:

"What mean you, Lady Grace of Greyhurst?"

"Just what I say, my poor dear cousin: it were better that Kenton Cavanaugh were dead, than what he is."

"Grace, your words grate strangely on my ears. When you told me that Kenton Cavanaugh was not dead, and that you and Zebel the Witch only knew a secret, I had hoped that he was, under another name, winning honor and fame, with the hope of one day coming and laying them at my feet, as, on account of the insults thrown upon him for being a one-time fisher lad, he wished to sink the past; but now you tell me, it were better that he had died, as we believed, in Castle Death, at the hand of the Witch, than be what he this day is. You speak in riddles, Grace of Greyhurst."

"Sit down, Kate, my cousin, and I will tell you all, and prepare to have your heart ache with what I have to say."

The words and manner of Lady Grace impressed Kate of Belmont, and she resumed her seat beside her, taking the hand of Lady Grace in her own, while she said in a low tone:

"I will hear all, cousin."

"Kate, you remember the day we rode to Castle Death with Kenton Cavanaugh?"

"How could I forget it? 'Twas the last time I ever saw him."

"Well, Zebel the Witch told him if he returned that night, she would tell his fortune."

"Yes, and he went, for I saw him in his little skiff sailing across the bay."

"True, he went; but what he heard from the Witch none can ever know; yet it sent him forth in the world an embittered man, and leaving those who cared for him uncertain of his fate, for we believed, you know, that he had died by the hand of old Zebel, for, when search was made at the castle, his skiff was found at the water stairs, and blood was in the vaults."

"The peasants, under your father, visited the old ruin, and feeling against the Witch was so bitter, that she was to be hunted down and burned at the stake, as a woman of ill omen."

"But it seemed she escaped, as you saw her here in New York, when all believed that she had been burned when the castle was set on fire."

"Yes, Kate, she escaped, and I aided her."

"You! you, Lady Grace of Greyhurst, aided that old hag to escape the fate she so justly deserved?" cried Lady Kate with anger.

"Keep calm, Kate, and hear me. Once, you remember, I nearly lost my life from drowning, but was saved, while my little brother sunk before my eyes."

"The one to whom I owed my life was an old woman, a crazy peasant, it was said, who was going on foot through the country; but who she really was, no one knew, as, after rescuing me she could not be found; but it was, *I know*, Zebel the Witch."

"Ah!"

"You may well feel surprised, Kate, and knowing me, you will understand that it was

not my nature to see that old woman, Witch though she may be, hunted down and burned by the peasantry; so I rode by night to Castle Death—"

"Grace!"

"It is true; I went to the stables, saddled my own horse, and rode by night to Castle Death, found the Witch, told her why I aided her, and gave her my horse to fly to a place of safety with."

"Oh Grace! Grace! but I remember now that your horse disappeared and was believed to have been stolen."

"He was not stolen; I gave him to the woman, and in return I begged her to tell me of Kenton Cavanaugh."

"And she did?" breathlessly asked Lady Kate.

"She did; she left me a slip of paper, as she promised she would, and upon it was written, as nearly as I can recall, that the one I sought to know the fate of, had found the story of his life, as told by her lips, such a curse, that he had given up honor and linked his life with pirates."

"Oh, God have mercy upon him!"

The cry was wrung from the inmost being of the proud maiden, and Grace said, in her soft, sympathetic tones:

"I pity you, sweet cousin, and it is a bitter thing for me to tell you, but I felt that you must hear all."

"You remember the night that your brother, Lord Gerald, had a sea combat with a buccaneer in the waters beneath Castle Cor?"

"Yes."

"You recall also that he boarded Lord Gerald's cruiser, and had him defenseless, when we all heard the pirate chief's stern order to cease firing and return to their own vessel?"

"Yes, and we could not account for it."

"I can; that pirate chief boarded the cruiser, not knowing that your brother was her commander; when he discovered the fact, he retreated."

"Alas! alas! Grace, how bitter, how overwhelming is thy sad story."

"Listen, cousin Kate, for it is best that you should know all; you remember—"

"Ah! I know what you would say; that when we came over in the Bloodhound and the pirate schooner pursued us, that you had Captain St. Vane haul down the British ensign, and raise my father's colors, the flag of Belmont and Castle Cor, and that the buccaneer at once put about?"

"Yes, Kate, that is what I would have said; and more: when we sighted the large cruiser, commanded by unfortunate Captain Dent, and were transferred to its decks, while St. Vane went on after the pirate, you will remember that the next night we were overhauled, attacked and boarded by the corsair who suddenly recognized your father, defending me from three of his crew, and—"

"And he killed the one who claimed you as his prize, and returned to his decks with his crew; but that was The Kyd, Grace, that terrible Curse of the Coast."

"And, Kate of Belmont, Kenton Cavanaugh, the fisher lad who dwelt on the beach near Castle Cor, is none other than Captain Kyd, of the Black Plume."

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN KYD'S IRON COMPLIMENTS TO A FOE.

FOR some moments after Lady Grace had finished her sad story, and told the bitter secret she had so long carried in her heart, no word was spoken, and only the sobs of Lady Kate were heard; but then there arose a cry in the lawn near the mansion, and both of them looked up in alarm.

Men were hastening to and from the house, and a sound of numerous voices was wafted to them from the tower, while the fort, almost deserted during the day, was filled with excited citizens.

"What can it all mean, Grace?" asked Lady Kate, drying her eyes.

The answer of Lady Grace was to call out to a servant of the household:

"Derric, what means this alarm?"

"It's the bloody pirate, my lady; don't you see him ather coming up to blow us all to the devil?" and the Irishman, a retainer of Castle Cor in the "ould country," pointed down the bay.

It was growing twilight, but both of the maidens beheld a large schooner, covered with canvas, coming swiftly up toward the city, and relieved against her white sails was visible the black flag of the pirate.

"It is The Kyd," groaned Lady Kate.

"Yes, Kenton Cavanaugh," answered Grace.

"He vowed he would sail by the city, with Clement St. Vane hanging at the yard-arm;—can he have captured him and be carrying his threat into execution?" said Lady Kate.

"God grant not; and I believe it was idle rumor of the Sound fishermen, who said he made such a vow—oh! Kate, this is another vessel, and see! *It is the Bloodhound.*"

"Oh, Heaven have mercy!" groaned Lady Kate, but, fascinated by the sight before her she remained gazing from the window.

The other sail spoken of by Lady Grace was indeed the Bloodhound, and she was coming down the East river from Long Island Sound, and just abreast of the Rondeel, or Battery, was received with a cheer from those in the fort, that reached the ears of the maidens.

"There goes the earl!" cried Lady Grace, as the Earl of Belmont suddenly dashed beneath the window, mounted upon his horse, and accompanied by half a dozen staff officers.

"They are going to the fort, to give courage to these Dutch citizen-soldiers; but yet, Grace, the Bloodhound fairly flies by the Battery, and her men are at the guns."

"Yes, they have warned St. Vane at the eastern fort that the Galley Slave is cruising up the bay—ah! the two vessels are in sight of each other now, and—oh, how terrible!"

The last remark of Lady Grace was from distinctly hearing the ringing order of Clement St. Vane:

"There's your game, lads! fire!"

The bow gun on the port side opened with a roar, and two, three, four, five, burst forth the broadside, as the beautiful king's cutter darted toward her foe, not a mile below what is known now as Governor's Island.

And then the Rondeel opened savagely with her four guns commanding the river, the courage of its Dutch gunners greatly screwed up by the sudden coming of the Bloodhound, and from a quarter wholly unlooked for.

"See! the shots fly wild! but will even that man be so reckless as to attempt to fight the forts too?" and, as Lady Kate spoke, the Hudson river fort, the one at the western extremity of the city wall, sent its iron compliments to the buccaneer, who had escaped injury and still held on as though determined to run the desperate gantlet past the city.

"No! he swerves from his course! See, he is heading over to the Jersey shore! Can he mean to beach his vessel and escape to the hills?" cried Lady Kate.

"Kate, I can tell you what he intends to do: he will run over toward the Jersey shore, until he gains a position where his shot will not come rattling into this old mansion, where he knows that—"

The maiden checked herself, for the schooner suddenly luffed up into the wind, bore round, and as she did so her broadside seemed like a fiery furnace, while her guns boomed with ominous roar.

"Oh God! see there!"

It was Lady Grace who spoke, and her exclamation was caused by hearing a crashing sound, and seeing the Bloodhound stagger, yaw widely, and then broach to, her bowsprit being shot away close, and her anchor being cut loose, falling into the water and checking the cutter's speed with a shock that sent every man flat on the decks.

Apparently satisfied with scaring the citizens half to death, and punishing the cruiser, the Galley Slave swept on around, as though on a pivot, and stood back down the bay.

And, as his white sails disappeared in the gathering gloom, and the two cousins gave a sigh of deep relief, there was one who was standing on the shore alone, that uttered a bitter curse, while she said savagely:

"Fool! fool! he will yet run his head in the noose by his recklessness, which is greater than even his accursed father's was," and Zebel the Sorceress returned to the Inn of Jost Stall, to the consternation of those who had hoped she had gone back to her island den.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLEDGE OF A PIRATE.

It was the afternoon following the bold entrance of the harbor by the Galley Slave, and its punishment of the cruiser (for the broadside of the pirate had done considerable damage to the vessel, besides killing and wounding several of the crew) that the Inn of Jost Stall was again the headquarters for the ale-drinkers and gossipers of the town, who were discussing the stirring scenes of the day before with more vigor than usual.

The Bloodhound lay at anchor just where she had been so suddenly brought to by the corsair, and already another sharp bowsprit ran out over her razor-like bows, while the sound of the hammer and saw showed that the work of repairing damages was being rapidly carried on.

The Earl of Belmont, determined to strengthen the defenses of the city, was going the rounds with his engineers, while a small cavalcade of two ladies and two gentlemen had ridden away from the Governor's mansion, bound on a horseback gallop up to King's Farms, and from there to the high bluff, where a fine view could be obtained of the surging waters of Hell Gate.

These four were the Lady Lenore, or Countess of Belmont, and an officer of the earl's staff, and Lady Grace and Captain Clement St. Vane, who, as he was to sail the following day to again search for the pirate, had proposed a horseback ride for the afternoon, an invitation which was gladly accepted by the countess and her niece, though declined by Lady Kate, upon the plea of indisposition, she saying that she preferred her harp and embroidery to exercise.

Gayly past the Inn the party had ridden, and

of course they one and all came in as subjects for legitimate gossip from the ale-drinkers, Mynheer Von Bokelen, who was again at his post, remarking:

"Vell, dere ish mooch beauties in t'ose English ladies."

"You should git a squint at some o' our gals, stranger, and yer wudn't call them lily-faced wimmin putty," said a skipper, who ran a coaster between the Rhode Island Plantations and New York.

"Our Deutch-lant gerls is goot enough for me, mynheer; t'ey has rosy cheeks like abbles, t'ey has eyes like tiamonts, t'ey has figgers like—"

"Like you, I guess, stranger, for you Dutchmen are all fat, as the old Witch told you yesterday," put in the Rhode Islander.

His reference to the Sorceress caused a general look of uneasiness to pass over the crowd, while Mynheer Von Bokelen said:

"I wishes t'at somebodys kill t'at Vitch vomans."

"They ought to have her down my way, for what we do with witches down-East is a little the cutest, I can tell you."

"Vont you please take t' Vitch vomans down-East, Mynheer Schipper?" asked a worthy burgher.

"Waal, I don't mind; if you'll git her fer me, I'll give her a passage down to Salem free, and they'll fix her I guess, for, as I tell you, strangers, if we wants to get rid o' a witch, we throw her into a pond: if she sinks she isn't a witch, but if she swims she is a witch, and then we take and tie her to a stake and burn her, and the way we do it is a little the cutest I ever see."

"Tat is vera goot, mynheer schipper, but I tole you how t'ey toes vitcher vomans in my countree. First, goot peoplesh, t'ey veigh her mit te scales, mit von Piple on odder side: if te vitcher vomans ish more heavier as te Piples, ten she ish a vitcher vomans: if te Piples is more heavier ten te vitcher vomans, ten te—"

"Bible is the witch woman, I guess," put in a half-farmer, half-sailor from Long Island.

"Nor, nor, mynheer schipper! If te Piples is heavier, ten te vitcher vomans is not a vitcher vomans: vera goot."

"I guess it hain't very good for the witch; but it don't seem just fair, stranger, to put t' Bible ag'in' so much wickedness, but then every country has its customs, I guess, and things is different here from what they is down East; but I guess all of us, Dutch, Yankee, Nigger and Injun would all like to see Kyd and the Witch burned together at the stake."

A universal assent followed this suggestion of the Rhode Islander, and at once the conversation drifted from the Sorceress to the Corsair Chief, and all united in the hope that before very long Kyd would be taken and hanged, if not dealt with in a more cruel manner.

"I'd like to see him run off the sea, my friends, but he is too brave a man to be burned like a witch, or strung up on a gibbet," boldly said the Long Island skipper.

Seeing that public opinion was against him, he continued:

"I'll tell you how he treated me, and you all know, strangers, that he isn't a mean sea-thief, to rob only merchant craft, but that he'll attack any cruiser that suits his humor."

"It was after the last Line gale, and I had my topmast carried out, so put into a creek near Indian Head to repair damages."

"I anchored, set my men to work, and with my old musket took a stroll to knock over a deer, keeping along the creek bank."

"Suddenly a big stag sprung up not far off and I blazed away at him, but with a toss of his head he went on, and I felt I was so frustrated I hadn't hit him: but I saw him come down all in a heap and I ran toward him."

"But I stopped short, for there stood a tall handsome gentleman dressed in hunting suit and his face shaded by a soft hat and drooping black plume, yet having no gun; only a long bow and quiver of arrows."

"He bowed politely and said:

"Seeing that you missed your deer, sir, I brought him down for you."

"It was true; an arrow was sticking in his heart, and the hunter had been sixty yards away when he sent it."

"I thanked him, and asked him how it was I found him there, and he told me that his vessel was above in the creek, repairing damages, and invited me on board to have a glass of wine, while he said he would send his men with the stag to my vessel."

"I wanted him to share the stag with me, but before he replied another deer sprung up, and fully eighty yards distant, and, ere I could take my gun from my shoulder he had an arrow fitted and flying after the bounding animal."

"And down it came too, and the stranger smilingly said:

"We both have game for our tables now, captain."

"Well, they were both large deer, but you should have seen him raise them, without the slightest effort, and throw them across the limb of a tree, after which we continued on our way up the creek and soon came to his vessel."

"She was a beauty, and in spite of the work going on on board, was as trim and neat as a lady's parlor; she was heavily armed, and carried over a hundred men, all of whom were in uniform, and saluted their captain as he passed."

"Her cabin was as fine as a palace, and was just filled with pretty things, while on the transom was a pile of gold, quantities of jewelry, and a silver crucifix, and dirks with gem-studded hilts."

"He gave me a seat on a velvet divan and calling a negro servant, dressed in fancy costume, told him to bring wine and refreshments."

"And such wine, and such luxuries I never saw before, though I've been in many lands, and I drank and ate to my stomach's content, I can tell you."

"After awhile I rose to go, and asked him the name of his vessel."

"The Galley Slave, captain," he said with a smile."

"That is the name of Kyd's vessel," I replied."

"It is; and I am *The Kyd*," and he again smiled, but somehow I thought it was the smile of a hyena, and gave myself up for lost; but, determined to die game, I seized a cutlass—no, it was a cimeter such as the Greeks and Persians use—and started toward him, for, believing I would be killed, I determined to first kill the great pirate chief."

"He warded my blow off with a dirk not eight inches long, and wrested the weapon from my grasp as though I had been a mere boy, while he said in his pleasant way:

"Most sea-going men, captain, do not meet *The Kyd* as pleasantly as you do, so sit down again and finish your wine, for you are my guest, not my foe."

"I obeyed, for what else was I to do, strangers? Well, I soon after left, and he walked ashore with me and said:

"Captain, you do not remember me, but we once served together in the Royal navy of King William, under Captain Defoe, and as I wish to protect my old friends, I give you this, and should you ever cross the path of a sea rover they will aid you, not harm you, for there is honor among thieves, on sea as well as on shore."

"He said this with bitterness in his manner, and handed me a heart, made out of some blood-red stone, and through it was stuck an arrow of gold, and on the latter was engraved these words:

"*Respect this pledge—Kyd.*"

"But there it is, friends, as I always carry it with me," and the skipper took from his pocket the trinket; a stone an inch in diameter, carved in the shape of a heart, and pierced by an arrow of gold, upon which was engraved the command of Kyd to respect the pledge."

"Vell, he didn't vas kill you, mynheer schipper?" asked a burgher."

"Oh no, or I wouldn't be here to tell the story; on the contrary he sent the stag to my craft, put his men at work repairing the damages I had sustained in the gale, bade me good-by, and I set sail; but half an hour after the Galley Slave came out of the creek and sailed by me as though my vessel were standing still, and I've got the liveliest sailer in the Sound. Now you know why I say I'd hate to see him hanged, but rather die on his own deck like the brave man he is."

"And you did sail with him, stranger?" asked the Rhode Islander."

"Yes; though I recall his face, I cannot place him exactly; but then I've cruised round a great deal and met many men in my time; but there comes a sail up the bay."

All eyes at once turned seaward, and there was visible a vessel standing up through the Narrows, and 'twas feared that the terrible pirate intended paying another visit to the good citizens of New York, and many a rubicund visage grew pale at the thought."

CHAPTER VII.

THE THREAT.

THE vessel that the Long Island skipper had seen entering the Narrows, and heading toward the city, at once became an object of particular interest, while many were the comments made regarding her character, nationality, and the cause of her coming.

The news spreading, the worthy citizens began to assemble, as soon as it was announced that it was not the Galley Slave, and, accompanied by their wives and children, the burghers sought the front of the inn, where were already gathering the old and young, negroes and Indians, and in fact the larger portion of the citizens.

Coming swiftly on, it was soon seen that she was a brig, and some pronounced it to be one of the royal cruisers that made its rendezvous in the harbor, while others said it was the returned packet from Barbadoes."

"Tis not the king's vessel, nor the packet," said the Long Island skipper, making a shade for his eyes with his hands."

"It ish de Glasgow packet den," suggested Mynheer Von Bokelen."

"No; the Glasgow packet is a square-rigger,

and this one is polacca-rigged," answered the Long Islander."

"Den it moost be te Golt coast nigger trader."

"Nor the slaver either, skipper."

"Yonder craft is a polacca-rigged brigantine,

and she appears unarmed and sails like a witch."

All eyes were at once turned upon the speaker, and beheld the young sailor, who the day before had told the fearful story of Kyd's brutality to the Spanish maiden and her lover."

"Who says aught against Zebel the Witch?"

Instantly there was a movement of unfeigned terror, and the Sorceress hearing the words of the sailor, as she came near, forced her way through the crowd."

Although those assembled quickly gave the dreaded woman room, the young sailor held his ground, and replied with a light laugh:

"I spoke the word witch, old beldame, but I was not fool enough to compare yonder trim craft with you."

"What! do you laugh at Zebel the Sorceress?" she cried in her harsh voice, and her eyes burned with anger, while those there assembled expected to see the audacious seaman suddenly spirited away, by some magic power of the weird woman."

"You are a more fitting subject to weep over, woman," and he added with a laugh:

"Go and use your charms on others, for I hold a charm given me by the Devil himself, and you cannot harm me."

Even old Zebel recoiled at the tone and manner of the young sailor, and, with the painted wand she held in her hand, she made several mystic movements and walked on toward the fort, to the great relief of the citizens, who breathed more freely after her departure."

Once freed of her presence the conversation turned again upon the coming vessel, and it was evident that those on the cruiser believed her harmless, for the preparations first begun, to give her a warm reception, had ceased, and the sound of the hammer was heard once more, while, taking their cue from the cutter, the men in the fort had not manned the guns."

In the meantime the brigantine passed out of sight behind the wooded shores of Governor's Island, and reappearing on the west side stood steadily on until abreast of the cutter, saluting by dipping her flag, which was now seen to be the English colors."

Standing upon the shore, the sunlight falling upon her face and lighting up her eyes with a baleful glare, Zebel the Sorceress gazed earnestly at the coming vessel, until she beheld her round suddenly to, her sails shiver in the wind, and then descend to the deck by the run, and dropping her anchor, swing slowly around until she felt its restraint and became stationary upon the waters."

With the sigh of relief that went up from the crowd in front of the Inn, at sight of this peaceable manifestation on the part of the strange vessel, there broke from the lips of the Sorceress the earnest cry:

"Ha! he is there!"

For some moments her eyes were riveted upon the decks of the brigantine, and then she said:

"He is as ever, bold and audacious, to come as he has done; but he has kept his promise to me, and this night shall I see him face to face."

She turned on her heel as she spoke and glided, rather than walked away up into the town."

In the meantime a boat was let fall from the brigantine, with four oarsmen, and one person in the stern, and headed for the Rondeel."

Coming near it was hailed by the guard, and the man who held the tiller arose and answered:

"I report the arrival of His Majesty, King William's brigantine, Flying Cloud, with relief stores for the Royal cruisers."

"Tat ish vera goot, Mynheer; it ish petter tat you ton't pe a bloody puccaneer, my fri'nt, so tat ve don't plow you up to te tyvil," answered the valiant Dutch officer in command of the fort, bristling with courage, now that Zebel the Witch had departed from the immediate neighborhood of the Rondeel, and the brigantine appeared peaceably inclined."

The one who had hailed from the boat smiled at the remark of the worthy Dutch officer, and answered:

"We were chased in by the pirate Kyd, and the cutter might find him now in the offing."

This effectually quieted the fort's commander, and the boat from the brigantine, instead of putting in shore at The Ledge, as was expected it would do, by those who were watching its movements, headed up the river and landed at the lawn of the Governor's mansion."

With a low order to the oarsmen, the man who had been seated at the tiller walked slowly across the ground in the direction of the old stone hall, which his eyes were closely scanning."

He was a man of splendid physique, tall, slim-waisted, and with broad massive shoulders, though his feet and gauntlet-covered hands were small and well-formed."

He was dressed in a dark suit, a cloak hung from his shoulders, and a soft Spanish hat in which was a magnificent plume of jet black covered his head, and half-shaded his face,

which was very dark, stern and decided; his eyes were black, piercing, and yet full of sadness, and a black mustache concealed in part his mouth.

With a quick, determined tread he approached the mansion, first bending toward the main portal, and then, after an instant's hesitation, turning to the left, and river side.

Suddenly he paused, and within a few feet of the stone wing that projected toward the west, and, in the attitude of listening he stood, his head bent forward, and whole pose that of one who was deeply moved.

And what had so moved the stranger was a voice in song—the voice of Lady Kate Belmont singing a ballad of Ireland, while her fingers swept the harp-strings in sweet accompaniment.

Soft and touching rose the voice, and tremblingly the seaman stood and listened to the words, falling from the singer's lips:

"Like an emerald gem on the breast of the sea,
Dear Erin, my home! is thy vision to me;
As the sun to the day—as the morn to the night,
Is thy thought to my soul—'tis its warmth and its light.

"Sweet clime of my kindred—loved land of my birth!

The fairest, the dearest, the brightest on earth;
Oh! where'er I may roam, how'er blest I may be,
My spirit all lonely returns unto thee.

"My first budded passion there burst into bloom,
The flower of young hope, that now lies in the tomb!

But that brief life of love! though whole ages may roll,
O'er my heart in despondence, 'tis fresh in my soul."

When the last note had died away, and with a tremor that told how deeply the singer felt what she sung, the stranger approached the window, which was open, and glanced within.

His eyes fell upon the fair occupant, bending over her harp, and from her lips came the words distinctly to his ears:

"Oh God pity me; I love that old remembrance of the days at Castle Cor, more than I do life itself now; but I must drive from my heart every fond memory of the past now, for 'twere better that he were dead than what he is."

"Lady Kate of Castle Cor."

The name was spoken softly, but it brought her to her feet in an instant, pale and trembling.

"My name! and spoken as from the very lips of Kenton Cavanaugh!"

"Lady, it is Kenton Cavanaugh."

Suddenly before her eyes, standing by the low, and open window, she beheld the tall form and stern face of the seaman, and to her lips came the cry:

"Kenton Cavanaugh!"

"Ay, Lady Kate, it is he whom thou once didst call thy friend," he said, in a low, rich voice, and with his burning eyes fastened upon her.

"Stand, sir! The past is buried, and thou hast no claim now upon the friendship of Kate of Castle Cor."

She drew herself proudly up, and her look was imperious and determined.

Unheeding her manner, with a light bound he sprung through the window and knelt at her feet, at the same time humbly bowing his head.

Her first determination was to cry out and alarm the servants; but knowing all that he was, dare she, loving him as she did, bring those upon him who would attack and kill, or worse still, bear him to the gallows?

No, no! That splendid form, and dark, handsome face must not be laid low in the dust by her command, for once he had saved her life, and she would not by act of hers forfeit his.

And oh! how magnificent he looked! and how he had changed, from the handsome boy into the superb man, even though she knew that infamy was branded upon his brow, and his hands were red with human life-blood.

He saw her hesitancy, felt what thoughts were passing in her mind, and said in a voice that trembled with impassioned emotion:

"And is this my welcome, Lady Kate?"

"I have no welcome for thee, Kenton Cavanaugh."

"Hail dost cast me out of thy heart then, fair lady?" he asked quickly.

"Thou hast no claim upon my heart, and I bid thee leave me at once."

"Lady, have you forgotten the past? No, no! I feel, I know that you have not, for not five minutes ago thou didst sing a song of thy home and thy early love; who was it, lady, that caused the flower of young hope to fade in thy heart, and thy love to sink into the tomb, as said thy song?"

"Thou hast no right, Kenton Cavanaugh, to ask this of me. The past is buried, and I am Lady Kate of Belmont, whilst thou art—"

"Who?" he asked as she paused.

"One whom I believed dead; one who had better be in his grave than what he is; one who has forfeited all claim upon my regard, and won a name that none can speak without a shudder."

"Hail then thou knowest me as—"

"The Kyd!"

His head again drooped, and from his lips came in low, pathetic tones:

"Oh God!"

"Ah, Kenton Cavanaugh, defame not the name of thy Deity with thy unholy lips."

"Kate, thou art my Deity, for I have worshiped thee since, a barefooted fisher-lad, I gathered sea-shells upon the beach beneath Castle Cor, and gave them to thee; they were all I had to give, but with every shell went a hope, a throb of love, and—"

"Silence, sir, these words ill become the ears of Lady Kate of Belmont, from—a pirate."

He staggered back as though a severe blow had struck him, and his face was lined with deep emotion.

Then his eyes burned with anger, as though a savage retort arose to his lips; but with an effort of his giant will he controlled himself in an instant, and said:

"Yes, Lady Kate, I am a pirate: ay, even worse, I am The Kyd; but still I have loved thee in all my wanderings."

"Thy love is an insult, sir pirate, when thou dost bear the name of Kyd."

"Hail thy tongue hath venom in it, now-days, fair Lady of Belmont: and so has my heart, as thou shalt find, for from this day I swear to thee, the name of Kyd shall spread terror along this coast, and upon the sea."

"Behold yonder vessel lying at anchor under the guns of thy noble father's forts, and in pistol-shot range of the Bloodhound, let loose upon my trail to drag me to the gibbet! Well, Lady Kate, yonder fleet vessel became my prize last night, and she was sent as a relief ship to this port, and her commander was thy old-time lover, my foe, Lord Manly of Meredith Castle, he who laid his whip upon my shoulders from jealous rage because I saved thy life, and who hired assassins to slay me and mine—"

"Heaven have mercy upon him!" gasped Lady Kate.

"Ay, but thy prayers to heaven cannot save him from my vengeance for I have no fear. Thou seest what I have dared, to come here to thee; but, cast off by thee, thou wilt see what I dare do as Kyd, the Curse of the Coast."

He had spoken rapidly, standing before her as she leant on her harp for support, and when he finished speaking he turned quickly, bounded through the window, and again crossed the lawn, while the poor maiden, unnerved by his coming and terrified by his threat, fell in a deep swoon upon the floor, the anguish wrung from her heart breaking from her lips in a wailing cry.

CHAPTER VIII.

TAKING THE CHANCES.

WHEN Captain Kyd, for such the reader knows him to be, left the Governor's mansion, he returned to his boat, sprung into the stern-sheets, and said sternly:

"Give way!"

The crew saw by the face of their chief that he was in no pleasant humor, and gave way at their oars with such good will that they reached the brigantine's side just as twilight shut in land and water, rendering objects indistinctly visible in the direction of the town.

Entering the cabin of the brigantine, which was built especially for a relief and dispatch vessel, and had been armed with two long pivot guns only, rather for aids in escaping an enemy, than fighting, Kyd hastily changed his dress for the uniform of a lieutenant in the Royal navy, and throwing his cloak over his shoulders he once more returned to the deck, and called to his side an officer who was pacing to and fro, and apparently enjoying the lovely twilight scene.

"Dunstan, get the brigantine under way and run up East river until you are out of sight of the fort at the east end of the wall; then drop anchor and await my coming, for I am going first on board the cutter yonder, and then up into the town."

"You run a fearful risk, Captain Kyd," answered the officer.

"I enjoy the danger, Dunstan; when you anchor, keep on the alert to run at any moment."

"Ay, ay, sir, your orders shall be obeyed, but I would feel better if we had the Galley Slave beneath our feet."

"This craft is a fleet one, should it come to speed; but no one suspects her of being other than I have represented—that is but one, and I do not dread her making known the secret," and Kyd went over the side into his boat, which now had six oarsmen and a coxswain in it.

"To the cutter," was the quiet order, and accustomed to obey every command of their fearless leader, no matter how great the danger, the crew silently let fall their oars, and the coxswain, who held the tiller, headed for the Bloodhound.

Captain Clement St. Vane had not yet returned on board, but Kyd was received at the gangway by the officer in charge.

"I am Lord Manly Meredith, sir, captain of the Royal relief brigantine Flying Cloud, and I desire to report that I have been to the Governor's mansion, and have orders to anchor up the East river."

There was no hesitancy in the voice of the chief, as he unflinchingly made the assertion, of who he was and what he was to do, and not for an instant did the officer of the Bloodhound doubt him, for he had been seen to report to the Rondeel, and then to row to the gubernatorial mansion.

Knowing that Lord Manly Meredith was an Irish nobleman in the Royal navy, the lieutenant invited him into the cabin to have a glass of wine, an invitation that was promptly accepted by Kyd, whose quick eyes scanned the cutter from stem to stern, taking in her entire strength at a glance.

A toast to the king, another to the Earl of Belmont, and a third to the success of the Bloodhound's cruise, which the lieutenant felt no hesitancy in making known to his distinguished visitor, assuming that he was Lord Manly, and Kyd took his departure.

Running along the shore for a short distance, he landed near a pile of rocks, at high tide washed by the surf, and amid which grew a few stunted cedars.

Springing ashore he was suddenly confronted by the form of a man, who had hardly appeared ere he was in the iron grasp of the chief, whose hand was upon his throat.

"Hail it is thou, Lennox! you came too suddenly upon a man who carries his steel in his hand."

"Yes, captain, it is what you have left of me. Merciful Heaven! what a grip you have got," and the man, who was the young sailor that was stopping at the Jost Stall Inn, caressingly rubbed his throat.

"Well, what have you discovered, the week of thy stay in the city, which our English ancestors are now pleased to call New York?" asked Kyd in a light tone.

"The Galley Slave could sink the cutter, silence the forts, and drive out of town every Dutch soldier the English have retained as guards," was the reply.

"I care not to sack the town; but did the Earl of Belmont bring over no troop-ship with him?"

"No, captain; he has only the Dutch soldiers, who smoke so much that their powder smells of tobacco."

"And the old beldame?"

"Lives here, or near here, on an island."

"That I know, from the word she sent me."

"She is known as the Sorceress of Hell Gate, and the honest Dutch burghers fear her as they do the devil."

"She is worse than the devil, Lennox; but you know her place?"

"Yes, captain."

"It is beyond the eastern fort?"

"A league, chief; on an island washed by the Hell Gate, which you boldly ran through several times in the schooner."

"Then get into the boat and wait for me at a point on the shore beyond the fort; be careful to keep near the other bank, so as not to attract attention going up."

"Ay, ay, sir; and you, captain?"

"I have a humor to stroll through this quaint old town."

"It is dangerous, captain, for there are men here who may recognize you."

"I'll take the risk; do as I say," and, as the boat shoved off from the shore, Lennox having sprung into the stern-sheets, Kyd walked leisurely along in the direction of the Inn of Jost Stall.

It was not yet the hour when the town bell on the *Stadt-Huys* rung the hour warning all slaves,* Indians and idlers, who had no business abroad, to seek shelter for the night, and quite a number of patrons still smoked their long pipes, sipped scheitum, or gulped ale in front of the Inn, for the evening was balmy and wooed them outdoors.

As the tall, cloaked form of the pirate approached, every eye was turned upon him; but, as though reveling in the risk he ran, he coolly took a seat and called for a bottle of Frau Stall's best grape, which was cheerfully given him by the tidy frau herself, with many a bow to her distinguished-looking visitor.

Having sipped his wine in silence, and settled his score, Kyd arose, and wended his way into the heart of the city, stepping one side, as a party dashed by on horseback.

"Great God! it is the Countess Lenore and Lady Kate of Greyhurst! Oh, curses on the hag that told me of my parentage, and drove me from honor's path, to become the hated, dreaded being I am."

"Bah! dare I recall even those days?"

"No; they are gone, and I am what I am, and as Kate of Belmont has driven me from her, when one kind word would have made me oh! so different, I will not now repine, but keep on in the red path my feet have led, and woe be to those who cross the course of Kyd, the Accursed."

The party had ridden on as he stood gazing after them, and little dreamed the proud countess, the Lady Grace, and their gallant escorts, that the Curse of the Coast had stood within two feet of them as they dashed by.

* There were slaves in New York at that day.

CHAPTER IX.

A DOUBLE SURPRISE AT THE CITY GATES.

AT the gate of the city, which, as I have before stated, was in the wall at what is now Broadway, but was then the country road, two Dutch citizen soldiers were on duty, and longingly casting their eyes in the direction of the Jost Stall Inn, and mentally damning Kyd for having given them all such a scare the day before.

"*Sacremet donner vetter!* Mynheer Rosenfeldt, it ish nine o'clocks, for don't you vas hear te Stadt Huys bell for te niggers ant te Injuns to go home?"

"Ich vish tat ve could pe go mit home, Mynheer Von Housen," was the disconsolate reply of the second guard.

"Vell, tere ish nopodys tat kin git in mit te gates, and Ich don't care if anypodys gits out mit himself, so Ich vill go und git some Scheitam, unt schmack mine lips."

"Tat ish vera goot—*pots gevitter!* vat ish dat cooms, Mynheer Von Housen?" and the guard looked earnestly down the street, where a dark form was visible coming toward them at a quick tread.

"*Pfui Teufel!* it ish te Vitcher voomans," said Mynheer Rosenfeldt in a scared whisper.

Had there been a chance for flight the two worthies would have taken that chance; but there was not, so they stood trembling, their firelocks in hand.

"Schuppose Ich shoot mit my goon?" said Mynheer Von Housen with sudden courage.

"Nor! nor! mynheer, she ish a Vitcher voomans—*Himmel tousand!* a bullet ish not hurt her."

"I pass here, knaves!"

The voice of the woman was harsh and commanding, and she halted within three feet of the trembling Dutchman.

"It ish petter ash she pe outshide, Mynheer Von Housen."

"Ich not like te tyful inschide, Mynheer Rosenfeldt," was the cautious reply.

"Unbar that gate, ye jabbering cowards," came the stern command; but mustering up courage, as he remembered his orders to allow no one to pass in or out, Mynheer Von Housen said:

"Vitcher voomans, vot is te pass-voord?"

"I give no word: I am free as the wind and go where I please without hindrance: unbar that gate, or I will bring upon ye blight and—"

"It ish petter she pe out, Mynheer Von Housen," and Mynheer Rosenfeldt quickly unbarred the gate and said himself:

"Pash out, Vitcher voomans."

She silently obeyed, and watching her they saw her turn into the path leading to East river, by the way of Maiden lane.

Shutting the gate the two guards turned and looked at each other in silence, and then one said:

"Nopoty kin git inschide now, Mynheer."

"Nor, and no one vill vant to go out mit te Vitcher vooman."

"Vera goot: so ve is petter go to Frau Stall ant git a glash o' Scheitam."

"Aut a bipe—*Himmel tousand!* who ish tat coomes?"

The stalwart city guards were again surprised, and in awe, for another person was approaching the gates.

As he drew nearer they saw that it was a man of tall form, and wearing a cloak, while he walked with a quick firm tread.

"It ish te officer, Mynheer Von Housen, so we makes him give te passwood, tat he see how prave ve pe."

"Vera goot, mynheer; it ish goot tat ve don't pe go for scheitam."

"And a bipe."

And thus deciding, one of the two raised his voice in stern challenge:

"Halt! who ish cooms?"

The answer came not in words, but by action, for, with a mighty spring the stranger was upon the challenger, and hurling him to the earth with a force that nearly knocked the breath out of his body, he turned to grapple with Mynheer Rosenfeldt.

But that worthy, in spite of his dumpy legs and two hundred and ten pounds of Dutch fat, was flying for his life with a speed that an Indian runner might have envied.

With a light laugh, more in ridicule than of merriment, the stranger unbarred the gates, passed through and turned into the path leading along the outside of the wall and down to the East river.

Arriving in sight of the water he suddenly heard the stern order:

"Halt! who comes?"

"Galley Slave," was the quiet response, while his hands dropped upon the hilt of his short sword and the butt of a pistol.

"Ay, ay, captain, I thought it was you from your tread."

"Ah, Lennox, you are on the *qui vive*, I see; well, we will be off at once for the island of that old beldame."

The boat lay alongside of the green bank, Lennox having been standing on shore beneath the shadow of a tree, and springing into the stern sheets the chief said, sternly:

"Give way! and pull with a will; I will take the helm myself, Lennox."

"I'm more than willing, captain, for we are going to run a close race with Death in going through Hell Gate; but yonder comes the moon to aid us."

"Moonlight or darkness it matters not to me; I can run the race and come out ahead of old Death, for I wasn't born to be drowned, Lennox," was the reckless reply, and the spirit was felt by the crew, while Lennox, who was Kyd's favorite young lieutenant, said, quickly:

"And I hope not to be banded, captain."

Kyd made no reply, but held the boat on her course up the river and close inshore, until half a mile had been passed over, then he said:

"Ship your oars, men, and set the sail, for those Dutch soldiers do not keep a watch that will enable them to see us from the fort."

"No, indeed, captain; we passed close enough under their noses to see the fire of their pipes and smell their tobacco, and they were too busy discussing the merits of Jost Stall's scheitam to either see or hear us; if the Earl of Belmont don't change his Dutch soldiers he will lose New York some fine night, for several of the rovers have thought of raiding the city."

"Did they make the attempt, Lennox, I would be there to defend New York," was the stern reply, and the mast having been stepped, and the sail set, the boat darted on its way under pressure of a fair wind, and in the direction of that dread of the mariner coming through the Sound, Hell Gate.*

CHAPTER X.

RUNNING DEATH'S GANTLET.

"THERE is a boat ahead, Lennox."

The keen eye of Kyd had discovered far ahead upon the waters a small sail-boat, and it was standing in the same direction in which he was steering.

"Some farmer on the river, sir, returning after going to market with his vegetables," suggested Lennox.

"No marketman would run this river at night, since the Sorceress of Hell Gate has made her abode on its banks," was Kyd's reply, and he gazed earnestly upon the discovered sail, but rounding a headland it was hidden from view.

But soon after the pirate's boat swept around the point of land, and the other sail was distinctly visible, and running in close to the island, now known as Blackwell's.

"She sails like a witch, captain, for we are running along well."

"It may be the old witch herself."

"No, sir, I think she left early, for after my few words with her, I saw her go to the shore, and as soon as the brigantine dropped anchor she walked rapidly away."

"Well, whoever it is, handles a boat finely, for it is getting into the surge of the Gate now," and Kyd held closer inshore, and on the two little crafts sped in silence, the moon lighting their path over the waters.

And as they flew on the moan of agitation was distinctly heard, until the sound increased to a roar like a cataract, while eddies of foam were whirled by them, and bubbles and waves broke against their bow.

But unhesitatingly the leading boat held on, and unflinchingly Kyd followed, though the hissing of the waters, and their wild commotion grew each moment more appalling.

"Yonder craft has a pilot who knows Hell Gate," said Lennox enthusiastically, steadily watching the leading boat, with utter indifference to their own danger, an indifference not shared by the coxswain and the crew, who felt that they were going on a foolhardy errand; yet fear of the stern, silent chief at the helm, was greater than their dread of the wild waters, and no man dared raise his voice in opposition.

The river now seethed and boiled like a caldron, whirlpools caught the boat and turned her half round in spite of the pressure of the wind upon the sails, and Kyd said quietly:

"Coxswain, get your oars out to keep her steady; but don't let fall until I order you."

Glad of a chance for action, the men quickly obeyed, and the six oars hung over the wild waters, ready for a dip and strong pull whenever the order came.

Wilder and wilder now the waters grew, huge black rocks were upon every side, and, as the current swept around them, there were deep, foaming gulfs opened and threatening instant destruction; but, as the bows of the boat seemed about to dive into the watery cavern, the stern order came:

"Starboard oars! with a will!"

And away from the danger the bow would move, and steadily on, in spite of the seething waters, the boat would hold, until again the deep voice was heard:

"Larboard oars! with all your power!"

And once more the danger was avoided, and then Lennox, from the bow, said:

"That boat turned in here, captain; see, this opening!"

"Then it was the Sorceress; no other would

*Hell Gate, or as it is sometimes called now, Hurl gate, until late years was indeed most dangerous, and could be passed only by the most skillful pilots.

risk this fearful gantlet," and, putting his helm hard down, he swept into a passage between the rocks, and the boat floated quietly upon placid waters, for it was a basin in an island, around which washed the seething, roaring current of Hell Gate.

"Hal! hal! hal!"

Even Kyd started as the mocking laugh rung out above his head, and the crew crouched low in the boat, the Catholics crossing themselves and muttering *pater-nosters*.

"Hal! hal! hal! You have come, then, Captain Kyd, to the home of Zebel, the Sorceress."

All glanced up to the summit of the overhanging rocks, and saw the form of the Sorceress, her red cloak flapping in the wind, and her long white hair looking like threads of silver in the moonlight, while she waved her wand in a wild, mysterious manner as she continued:

"Thou wouldst have gone to the bottom, Captain Kyd, great as thou art, had not the wand of Zebel, the Sorceress, guided thee."

"Ay, Zebel, the Sorceress, has kept thee from drowning that thou mightst hang."

"Hal! hal! hal! welcome to my home, oh, thou accursed of man and God!"

"Welcome to the home of the Witch, thou Curse of the Coast."

"Is not it a joyous spot to dwell, with the roar of the waters, the howling of the winds, and the shrieking storm-birds to make merry music?"

"But come! Come, for I await thee at my palace amid the rocks, oh, thou mighty skimmer of the seas."

Fascinated by her presence and weird words, Kyd and his crew had sat motionless in their boat, gazing up at the Sorceress in silence; but, as she disappeared, the chief made a motion, the oars dropped into the water, and in a few seconds the bows touched the rocks, against which lay the small skiff of Zebel, its sail dripping wet from the spray that had dashed upon it in coming through Hell Gate.

"Lennox, await me here; if you hear my signal, come!"

Kyd said no more but sprang upon the rocks and rapidly ascended the steep pathway to the summit.

Gaining it, he saw that he was on a small island, or rather pile of massive rocks, towering in the center, and upon the western shore; a few stunted cedars, a large oak and a willow, were all the vegetation visible, and beneath their shelter, and upon the very brink of the rocks, below which the mad waters went flying by, was a rude hut, stanch, yet oh, so wild and desolate in that weird spot.

A fitting home for a witch it certainly was, for lonely, wretched, and desolate indeed must be the heart that could find a resting-place there.

Observing the trees, and then the hut beneath their shelter, Kyd walked unhesitatingly forward, until suddenly he halted, dropping his hand upon his sword-hilt, for above the deafening roar of the waters, arose the deep, angry bay of a bloodhound.

"Come! he is less terrible than I am, sir pirate," said a voice, and though Kyd saw not the speaker, he knew 'twas the Sorceress.

"I fear neither thee, thy devilish charms, nor brute companions, old hag of Hades," he answered, stepping up to where she stood.

"Thou liest, Captain Kyd! thou dost fear Zebel the Sorceress, ay, and believe in her weird power to bring good or evil, or never wouldst thou have come here this night."

"True, Zebel, I did come to seek thy aid, for men say thou dost possess rare powers," he said in a different voice.

"Men say: dost thou not know what my powers are? I hated Kenton Cavanaugh and I made him *The Kyd*."

"True, Zebel, I know all that thou canst do," was the reply of Kyd, who was by no means free from the weird superstitions that governed the age, from the highest to the lowest born.

"Then thou dost acknowledge my power?"

"Ay, do I, foul hag," burst from his lips, as if in anger with himself for being so weak as to admit any will stronger than his own.

"Then come, and fear not."

Again his hot spirit broke out, when she bade him have no fear, and he said quickly:

"I follow, if thou ledest to hell itself, thy destined abode."

CHAPTER XI.

THE KYD AND THE SORCERESS.

THE rude home of the Sorceress was constructed out of the planks and wreckage of all kinds of vessels, which the mad waters of Hell Gate had dashed upon the rocky island and sent to destruction.

From the humble fishing-craft to the stately Indian, had the hut been formed, and yet, in spite of its strange structure, within it was comfortable, though far from inviting to the visitor.

Divided into two chambers, one was devoted to the Sorceress wholly, while the other was reserved as her *Incantatory*, or magical room, and also the retreat of the bloodhound, an animal of immense size and with fierce eyes, red mouth and long tusks, and a deformed African,

so deformed in fact as to make him a monstrosity fearful to look upon, for he was, though bearing human semblance, worse than a beast in appearance, and more cruel than a brute in nature: and yet in his eyes shone the light of intelligence, showing that nature had left him one thing at least in common with his fellow-men: yet perhaps one it were better that he did not have after all, for it taught him only how much he was bereft of.

In the room of the Sorceress burned a lamp, with a green blaze, and emitting an odor of brimstone.

By its ghastly light the furnishing of the chamber was visible; a large coffin, velvet-lined and serving as a couch, with black pall for covering, and with a human skeleton worked in white embroidery upon it; a semicircle of small arms ornamented one side, consisting of foreign swords, daggers, firelocks and pistols, and a couple of chairs, skillfully manufactured out of human bones were the seats for any visitors daring enough to go to that strange abode.

A wand, with a long braid of human hair attached to one end, and an infant's skull upon the other, stood in one corner, and the floor was covered with dressed wolf, bear and wild-cat skins, to serve in place of a carpet.

With undisguised horror Kyd gazed upon the strange room and its furniture, and then silently followed the woman into the adjoining chamber, where a still greater surprise awaited him, for his eyes fell upon the ferocious bloodhound, crouching down as though to spring upon him, and the more hideous African, bending over a fire, above which on three sticks, *a la Gipsy* style, hung an iron pot, within which simmered some foul ingredient.

Around a pole in the center, numerous dead and stuffed serpents were entwined, and strings of toads, lizards and other revolting reptiles hung from the ceiling in festoons.

Upon a shelf a dozen grinning human skulls seemed to be gazing in silent, mocking laughter upon the visitor, and skeletons stood guard upon either side of the door and one window.

On an altar upheld on the heads of four infant skeletons, like the others skillfully riveted together in every part, stood a crucifix of solid gold, and an ebony statue of Satan, exquisitely carved; and behind these symbols of good and evil, were an owl, a raven, a loathsome vulture and a dove, all stuffed, and standing in a row.

Upon a roost over the altar a monkey sat chattering to a parrot, while a black cat of enormous size sat between them, as though to keep the two gossipers of the animal and feathered tribe apart.

These last three were alive, and kept their eyes upon the African with a fascination that might be readily understood when it was known that it was from his enormous hands they received their food.

As the Sorceress ushered Kyd into the room, the African arose, and the chief observed that he was naked to the waist, but wore a kilt of birds' feathers that hung down to his knees, and was upheld by a belt, in which was a knife with a long blade; around his neck was a string of fangs, and upon his wrists and ankles were claws of birds.

He did not look up as Kyd entered, but went on watching the fire, which sent up blue, green and red flames; the monkey, the parrot and the cat seemed also too intent upon the diabolical preparation in the caldron, to notice the coming of the Sorceress and her visitor, other than the former stopped his jabbering at the bird.

"Sutah, the great skimmer of the seas, the terror of blue waters, Captain Kyd, has come to seek our aid against his foes, the storms, and shipwreck," said the Sorceress, in her harsh tones, addressing the African, who answered in a deep voice:

"The Kyd is welcome; and thou canst give him charms that will protect him against the bolt of Heaven, the hatred of man, and the plot of woman."

As the African ceased speaking, the cat gave a shrill, unearthly shriek, the monkey chattered furiously, and the parrot shouted:

"Hell ahoy! Hell ahoy! Ho! The Kyd! The Kyd!"

"Hag of Hades, thy slave is as hideous in form as thou art in heart, and yonder three screechers are fit companions for thy accursed existence," said the chief, when quiet remained once more, excepting the roar of the dashing waters without.

"The dumb creatures are far-sighted, and recognize in thee, Kyd, the pet of Satan; the slave is faithful," answered the Sorceress, harshly.

"He seems to have been imported from the Gold Coast, and made especially for thy use, Witch Zebel; where didst thou get him?"

"He came in a slaver from the Gold Coast, as thou hast said, and the Dutch warriors would have tied a stone around his neck and sunk him in the sea, from very fear of him, but I saved his life."

"I know not whether he should love thee for it, or not, for life is not a blessing to desire, I have found; but I will give thee a thousand golden guilders for him."

"And what wouldst thou do with him, sir pirate?"

"Make him a figure-head for the Galley Slave."

"Show thy own heart in thy face, Kyd, and it is hideous enough for thy purpose; no, thy gold cannot buy Sutah; but a truce to compliments, chief; thou seekest knowledge of me and my aid."

"I do."

"First, what wouldst thou know?"

"Brought the Earl of Belmont his entire family here with him?"

"No, his son remains at Castle Cor; his wife, daughter and niece are with him at the mansion."

"Canst tell me if the Lady Kate hast a lover?"

"She has many; dost thou love her yet?"

"More than ever! Time has but added to my passion for her."

"And she has scorned thee as The Kyd, when she loves thee as Kenton Cavanaugh."

"Ha! how know you this, woman?"

"By my arts, which give me the power to read hearts as I can faces."

"I believe in truth, Zebel, that thou hast such power, for if thou art not indeed a witch, possessing the magic art of Satan, then no such exist on earth," he answered, in spite of himself, impressed by her presence and influence.

"Ha! ha! ha! thou shalt know ere long, Lord of Belmont, what I am."

"Lord of Belmont!—why dost thou call me by that name, woman?"

"Because thou art the next heir to the proud title of Earl of Belmont."

"In the fiend's name, what mean you, Witch?"

"I mean, Captain Kyd, that all I told you that night of storm in Castle Death is true: thou art the son of Hurltel, the younger brother of the Earl of Belmont, and thy father was known as Hurltel of the Red Hand."

"Woman, well I know that I am thus accursed," and the chief paced to and fro, his brow clouded, his lips sternly set, for overwhelming memories were crowding upon him.

CHAPTER XII.

A BITTER RETROSPECTION.

WITH glaring eyes the Sorceress watched the corsair chief as he paced the rocky flooring of the cabin, while the African seemed wholly unconscious of his presence, as he again bent over the boiling contents of the caldron.

At last the woman glided forward and touched the chief upon the arm, and it recalled him to himself and his fearful surroundings.

"These are pleasant memories you are exhuming from the grave of forgetfulness, sir pirate, so let me add to their interest; allow me to recall the fact that thy father's love for the fair Countess of Belmont drove him to lead the life of a hermit in his old Castle Crag, until he one night carried there a Gipsy girl who had saved his life; ay, carried her there, not as his bride, but as one whom he had dragged down into the dust of dishonor, because she loved him."

"What a crime she committed in loving thy handsome well-born father, and how was she punished?"

"Thou knowest well, ay, as well as thou art the son of Hurltel of Castle Crag and Gipsy Jule; and more, thou knowest that thy father linked himself with these roaming children of the sea and land, and that he became a pirate."

"Yes, thou dost inherit thy fair fame of pirate, Kyd; but had it not been for me, thou wouldst have died believing that the old fisherman who raised thee was thy father; thou wouldst have one day made a name of honor that would have caused thee to woo and win Kate of Belmont; but I held to thy proud lips the cup of misery, from which thou didst drink the knowledge that the famous corsair that thou didst slay, under the ensign of King Billy, was Hurltel of the Red Hand, and thy own father."

"Silence! woman, recall not that past to me, for the knowledge of what I was, made me what I am," said Kyd, sternly.

"What! does the great Kyd shrink from a story told by a woman?" she asked, with a sneer.

"A woman! thou art such only in form; thou art a devil in heart."

"So be it; but my devilry will aid thy advancement, for thou wert a fool not to have taken Kate of Belmont for thy bride long ere this, for thou didst have the power."

"True! But would you have me drag her down to infamy equal to my own?"

"I would have thee claim thy own, for thou art the heir to the earldom of Belmont."

"Thou liest! for Lord Gerald is the heir."

"And thou liest! for he is not."

"Woman, there is some strange mystery at the bottom of your words; what mean you?"

"Wilt do as I ask, if I will tell thee?"

"Yes."

"In everything?"

"Yes."

"Swear it!"

"I do!"

"Ha! ha! ha! I have no such milk-and-water oaths, Kyd; thou must swear as I bid thee."

He shuddered in spite of his great nerve, for

crime, as it ever does, had made him superstitious in a wonderful degree.

"Kneel!"

He obeyed, silently kneeling in front of the altar upheld by children's skeletons.

"Place thy right hand upon thy heart, thy left upon this symbol of Satan," and she referred to the ebony statue.

Raising the crucifix she held it to his lips and then said in sepulchral tones:

"Dost swear if I give thee aid in all thou wouldst accomplish, then thou wilt do in all things as I demand?"

"I do."

"This you swear, as now you kneel, with emblem of Heaven and Hell before thy eyes, or thy soul forfeit."

"I swear."

"Break thy vow and then thy soul shall forfeit."

With a cry of horror the chief sprang to his feet, for the words came to him as from the air.

"Hag of hell! thou hast given my soul to thy master," he shouted, and for a moment he glared at her, as though he would spring upon her.

But she laughed mockingly, and said:

"Captain Kyd, thou hast sworn to do my bidding, and before thou leavest here I will put about thy neck the charm that will keep thee from all harm, and lead thee to success in all thy plans."

"Now tell me what thou hast to tell, give me the charm, and let me leave this abode of Satan," he said, sternly.

"Thou art too hasty, sir pirate; now I tell thee what thou wouldst know—*Lord Gerald is not the son of the Earl of Belmont, and the countess.*"

"Ha! dost thou know this, Witch?"

"I do: their first child, a girl, was born dead; in the castle was the earl's secretary and his wife, and at the same time their child was born, and it was a boy, and alive."

"And this is true, woman?"

"Yes, they sold their boy to the Earl of Belmont, and buried the dead girl as their own."

"And they live?"

"No: Hurltel of the Red Hand, thy father, knew the story and they died by his hand, and had you not slain him, he would have killed his brother the earl, and have claimed the title."

"And Lord Gerald is that boy?"

"Yes; he stands between thee and the earl, and the earl stands between thee and the proud title and vast estates."

"Bah! what care I for the estates? I have kings' ransoms buried in the earth, woman."

"But the title, that would enable thee to claim Lady Kate as thy cousin."

"But my mother was not the bride of my father."

"I can prove that she was."

"Oh, woman! Witch, fiend! or whatever thou art, prove this to me and I will bless you; ay, I will worship you as a Deity, for behind me will I cast the red past and its horrors, and raise my head in honor among my follow-men."

He had dropped upon his knees before her, and clasped her hands, while in impassioned accents, that fairly startled her, he implored her to remove the curse that rested upon his birth.

But she answered in harsh tones:

"I said that I could prove that Jule the Gipsy was thy father's wife; but I would have to prove that which was false, but the title of Earl of Belmont is worth it."

"Curses upon thee, old hag! thou didst, for one instant raise in my heart fond hope that I was not the basely-born creature thou hast told me I was, and I could have even sunk the thought that Hurltel of the Red Hand was my father, were thy words but true regarding my birth; it was that accursed secret that made me reckless, desperate! and then, knowing who was my father, and that my own hand had slain him, it drove me to madness—ay, drove me to become what I am, *The Kyd.*"

For some moments after his impassioned words neither spoke, and then the Sorceress broke the silence:

"Captain Kyd, thy vessel is fleet, thy heart is brave, thy hand is firm; thou well knowest Castle Cor, so go thou across the sea and take the life of this supposed Lord Gerald."

"Temptress!"

"Ay, such I am."

"What hast thou to gain by my slaying Lord Gerald?"

"His mother was beautiful; she was once my rival; she turned my heart to gall."

"Ah! thou wouldst make me a tool to forward thy revenge."

"No, I would remove from thy path one whom the world believes to be the legitimate heir to Belmont."

"So be it, I obey."

"And more: dost remember thou didst once have a rival—Lord Manly Meredith?"

"He is in my power now; he bears the king's commission of captain, and got himself detailed to bring the dispatch and relief brigantine over, that he might again woo Kate of Belmont."

"And thou didst capture the brigantine?"

"I did, and he is my prisoner, though he knows not who I am."

"Tis well; he once did lay his whip across my shoulders, calling me a serpent, and set his dogs upon me, when I passed near Meredith Castle."

"And thou wouldst have me avenge thee?"

"Yes."

"I'll do so, but only by serving my own revenge; for Lord Manly of Meredith it was who hired assassins to kill old Dermot, the man I believed my father; and sure, he and I have a personal score to settle, which death alone can wipe out."

"Again 'tis well; but there is one more."

"Who?"

"The Earl of Belmont."

"No, no, woman, that man—"

"Your uncle."

"Call him what you please; he is a noble man, has ever treated me with kindness, even when I was a fisher lad, and I cannot take his life."

"Bah! The Kyd afraid of a little blood-letting."

"He is her father."

"He stands between thee and an earldom."

"I cannot, woman."

"Remember thy oath!"

The pirate started, for the voice was the same as before, and from whence did it come? he could not tell.

"You have heard: remember thy oath," sneered the woman.

"So be it: I am in the tide to Perdition: I will end his days," he said, recklessly.

"And then what?"

"What more would you have me do, Sorceress?"

"Claim thy title."

"And then?"

"Thou lovest thy fair cousin, Kate of Belmont?"

"Thou knowest it."

"Thou hast a rival."

He started more visibly than he had before, and said fiercely:

"His name?"

"Clement St. Vane."

"Ha! the commander of the cutter! A handsome and gallant man withal, and a thorough seaman, but one whose days are numbered if he crosses my path."

"See to it, sir corsair: now there is one thing more for thee to do."

"Name it."

"Make Kate of Belmont thy bride."

"She scorns me."

"She will yield to thy influence when thou art Earl of Belmont, her cousin, and no longer The Kyd."

"Not with my hands red with the blood of her father and supposed brother."

"She need not know whose hand has done the deed."

"I am content; now give me the charm or amulet thou hast promised, and, as I have sworn, do thou exert all the skill in thy accursed art of sorcery to give me success in all I do," he asked, deeply moved, and his imagination affected by the appalling situation in which he was placed.

"Enter that room and wait until I summon thee hither once more."

Silently he obeyed, the door closed behind him, and he was alone in the room of the Sorceress; alone with his superstitious, evil thoughts, wicked anticipations and maddening memories.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE AMULET.

"ART ready to receive the amulet, Captain Kyd, with all that its wearing implies?"

The chief started, and turning, beheld the Sorceress in the open door, through which now shone a crimson glare as from a red light.

Her costume had been changed to one of densest black, embroidered in red with weird devices, and upon her head she wore a crown of infant skulls, with one full grown in size in the center, making up altogether a most appalling head-dress.

In one hand she carried the wand before spoken of, and in dignified silence she awaited an answer to her question.

"I am ready for thy accursed necromancy, in whatever form it may come," he answered, sternly.

"Remember, he who wears this amulet, that I am to give, will have success through life, but and his days on the gibbet."

"So be it, Witch: I care not how I die, so that I have success in life," he answered, recklessly.

"He may one day, wearing this amulet, have to kill the mother that bore him."

"I have no mother, what care I; she who bore me, you have said, my father, Sir Hurlt of the Red Hand, hurled into the sea."

"And so he did, as I have told thee; but 'tis better that I give it not to thee."

"If thou dost not, foul hag, I will tear it from thee, were it within thy inmost heart," he said, savagely.

"Ha! ha! and then its charm would fall thee, Kyd, for I alone can bestow it."

"Then lose no time in giving it to me; but, if 'tis gold thou dalliest for, name thy sum."

"Gold cannot buy the amulet, Captain Kyd;

I have warned thee, and thou heedest not; come!"

"Give me the amulet then, and for it take what thou wilt," and he strode toward the open door.

The room was as he had left it, excepting the African stood at the head of an open coffin, and he was dressed in a pure white robe, only his face showing, enveloped in a kind of nun's veil.

Beneath the caldron now burned a red flame, and a strange glare was cast upon all.

"Place thyself within that coffin," commanded the woman, and silently the corsair obeyed, reclining as though he were dead.

Then in a wild, and yet not unmusical voice, the Sorceress chanted and waved over him her wand:

"He has given the control
Over body and of soul;
Now fire and water perform thy task—
A charmed life for Kyd I ask—
Protect his head
From steel or lead—
Protect his heart
From fiery dart—
Let not steel or lead his body harm,
Protected by this magic charm—
O'er the seas at midnight deep,
O'er the graves where dead men sleep—
Guard him, Prince of Sky—"

As she spoke she raised her arms and a rush of wind came through the room, causing a sudden chill, and making the red flames flicker wildly.

"Guard him, Prince of Sea."

She paused, and a shower of water fell upon Kyd, as he lay in the coffin, and he moved uneasily; seeing which the Sorceress quickly chanted:

"Peace, mortal, peace!
Cease, mortal, cease!
If, by thee, a word be spoken,
Then, by thee, the charm be broken."

He remained like the corpse he now looked, and the sorceress again sung:

"Guard him, Prince of Earth!"

A mass of damp earth now fell with a dead thud upon him.

"Guard him, Prince of Fire!"

For an instant Kyd believed that the room was in a blaze, as forked flames sprung up into the air and over him; but they quickly subsided, and the African's deep tones were heard:

"The Princes of Sky, Sea, Earth and Fire have accepted the pledge, Captain Kyd."

As he ceased the Sorceress broke forth in her wild tones:

"Mystic charms,
Shield from harm!
Winds and waves,
Be his slaves!
Mortal, naught can injure thee—
Spread thy sail and sweep the sea!
Vengeance now is in thy hand,
Be thy foes on sea or land!
If thy oath be kept not well,
Thy soul is forfeit unto Hell!"

As she ceased she turned toward the slave, who seemingly understanding what was expected of him, thrust a large ladle into the caldron and brought up a small object that glimmered like gold, and in fact was a shield of that precious metal.

A chain of iron links, not larger than a necklace, was then fished out, and the shield was fastened to it firmly.

"Mortal, this shield of gold and necklace of iron hath borne the heat of fire, the wash of human blood, and it is the amulet I promised thee."

She knelt by the side of the coffin, and fastened the chain around his neck, dropping the shield next to his massive chest, he offering no resistance, and submitting under the influence of her weird superstitions.

"Now, Captain Kyd, thou curse of the seas, thou dost wear the amulet—go!"

She pointed toward the door, and with a spring he was upon his feet.

A moment he stood thus, pale and trembling; and then the bloodhound burst forth in one long, dismal howl, the black cat whined, the parrot shrieked, the monkey chattered, and from the lips of the African and Sorceress broke a wild chant.

Maddened by the din, horror-struck at what he had passed through, Kyd seized his hat and cloak and bounded from the cabin.

A moment more and he was in his boat, his hand upon the tiller as firm as rock, his eyes upon the foaming waters, but with utter recklessness in his heart at the dangers, for he felt that he now bore a charmed life.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SPY IN THE CAMP.

WHEN Captain Kyd departed from the White Hall, leaving poor Lady Kate in a swoon upon the floor, it was a long time before she returned to consciousness, and in fact her life might have ended then and there, had not the servant come in to light the lamps and discovered her lying upon the carpet as though dead.

His cries of alarm brought the housekeeper and others, and Lady Kate was taken to her room, and a physician sent for, while messen-

gers were dispatched in search of the earl, and the riding party.

When the earl—who was at the eastern fort, watching the movements of the brigantine, that had dropped anchor in the middle of the river, with all her canvas up—arrived, he found his daughter returning slowly to consciousness, under the powerful restoratives used by the doctor, and soon after she opened her eyes and bent them with a frightened look upon her father.

"Has he gone; ah! has he escaped?" she cried eagerly.

"Poor child, her mind is wandering," said the earl, with great grief.

"Not so, my lord; the Lady Kate has had some severe fright, and—"

Before the doctor could say more a servant hastily entered with the startling news delivered in an excited tone:

"My lord, the pirate Kyd is in town!"

A low moan broke from the lips of Lady Kate, and she would have spoken, but just then Lady Grace swept into the room, the flush of her ride having gone from her face, as she advanced toward the bed and bent over her cousin, saying in a soothing tone:

"My poor cousin, you are indeed ill; a fright, some one tells me, caused you to faint."

"Oh! my dear Grace, I saw—"

"Sh—! for Heavens' sake do not betray him," whispered Lady Grace, and she added quickly:

"I know he has been here, for I saw him on the Bowling Green as we rode by, and recognized him at a glance; but do not betray him or yourself."

"I will not, my dear Grace—"

"My child! my daughter! you ill, and I not near you!" and the countess came hastily into the room, and having greeted Lady Kate affectionately turned and asked:

"Where is your father the earl?"

"He was called away, Countess of Belmont, by the information that the pirate Kyd was in the town," said the doctor in a low tone.

"Yes, Lady, Kyd of the Black Plume was seen coming to this mansion, so says Jasper," broke in the housekeeper.

"To this mansion? That scourge of the sea coming to the house of the Earl of Belmont? Impossible!" cried the countess in alarm and indignation.

"Mother, it is true! he it was who startled me, for I recognized him as the same person we had seen on the deck of his vessel when he pursued the Bloodhound, and afterward attacked the cruiser."

"I was alarmed at his sudden appearance, and I swooned away."

This was said by Lady Kate in a calm way that explained her indisposition, and while the countess spoke to the physician, she turned to Lady Grace and continued in a low tone:

"Grace, he was mad to come here; but he must not be taken."

"No, he must not be taken," answered Lady Grace firmly, and then her cousin startled them all by saying:

"It was but a fainting attack, and I am myself again, and shall get up."

Remonstrance was in vain; she arose and was soon down in the main hall, where were gathered a number of staff officers, conversing earnestly with the earl, while momentarily citizens and soldiers were arriving with news they had picked up, and at last a prominent officer of the city guard brought in two exceedingly startled individuals in the persons of Mynheer Von Housen and Rosenfeldt.

"These men, my lord, were at the city gates and saw the pirate," said the officer; and the countess, her daughter and niece pressed forward to hear what the stalwart guards had to say, the maidens far more anxious than their faces showed.

"And you have seen Black Plume, soldiers?" asked the earl quickly.

"Ant te Vitcher voomans too."

"Te pirate ant te Vitcher voomans too," echoed Mynheer Von Housen after Mynheer Rosenfeldt had spoken.

"Were they together?"

"Pots gervetter!" exclaimed Mynheer Von Housen.

"Himmel tausend!" echoed Mynheer Rosenfeldt.

The earl turned with a puzzled look for the interpretation of the words of the Dutch warriors, but his staff were no better acquainted with the strange exclamations and oaths of old Holland than he was, and remaining silent, the Governor again asked:

"You say that the pirate and the woman they call the Sorceress of Hell Gate were together?"

"Neln, Myn'eer Governor; te Vitcher voomans she vas room fust ant ve pe ask her te passwoord, ant she got mat, ant ve petinks it vas petter dot she pe on te outschide mit te gate, so ve ish let her mit te outschide," said Mynheer Von Housen, while Mynheer Rosenfeldt eagerly added:

"Ant ten cooms te pirate man Kyt mit his black plume so fine, ant Mynheer Von Housen say right away:

"Who cooms?"

"But he no answer, but jump on Mynheer Von Housen ant knock him down, while I roons away to call to guart for to make him a prisoner."

"And they both went through the gates?"

"Dat ish so, Mynheer Earl Von Belmont."

"You are a precious pair of cowards to let that man escape—ha! St. Vane, you have come, I am glad to see."

"Yes, my lord," said the young captain of the Bloodhound, entering the room:

"I have landed sixty of my crew, and have spread them in squads of four through the town, with orders to search it thoroughly, while the cutter is ready to sail at a moment's notice."

"You have done well; but the pirate has escaped from the city, for these two worthy Dutch warriors allowed him to pass by them, when they could have captured him," said the earl, sternly.

"No, my lord, there are no half-dozen men in Nieuwe-Amsterdam—I beg pardon, I forget the city's new name; I mean New York—not half a dozen men who would be able to take Kyd unless they caught him at a disadvantage," said a citizen officer of the guard.

"There is one at least, sir, who would make the attempt; but what are your orders, my lord?" and Clement St. Vane turned to the Governor.

"Remain here, captain, until news of some kind comes in; the ports are manned, the city full of patrols now, the cutter ready, and we must await developments; if the pirate is not discovered by daybreak you had better cruise up the Sound, for as he left on foot by the gates, his boat doubtless awaited him on the river above."

"Perhaps it would be best to recall my crew, and run up the Sound at once, sir, as his vessel cannot be far away, though, since last evening he must have made wonderful time to run around Long Island."

"No, I prefer to have the cutter in front of the city—ha! I had forgotten the relief-brigantine; send an order on board for her commander to run a few leagues up the Sound, and if he discovers the buccaneer vessel to fire one of the heavy pivot guns I noticed he carries," said the earl, and an officer started to execute the order, when Lady Kate turned anxiously to Lady Grace, and said in a whisper:

"He is on the brigantine, Grace; he captured it last night, and boldly came to the city in it; he must be saved, and I—"

"No, no, sweet cousin; you are yet weak, and I will in some way arrange it; if inquiry is made for me, say I have retired, and I will leave orders to that effect with Eyleen, my maid."

"What would you do, Grace?" cried Lady Kate, seizing her cousin's arm.

"Save Captain Kyd from the gallows," was the calm and determined reply, as the plucky maiden hastily left the room, having already made up her mind to some bold act.

CHAPTER XV.

A WOMAN'S WARNING.

"LENNOX, the brigantine is above the eastern fort; what can it mean?"

"And she is laying to, captain, and not at anchor."

"You are right; perhaps there has been some trouble," and turning to the crew of the boat, the chief bade them to pull more rapidly, and in ten minutes more there came from the brigantine a hoarse hail:

"Boat ahoy! keep off!"

"The Galley Slave," answered Kyd, and the officer in charge of the brigantine called out:

"Ay, ay, captain; I was not certain it was you, as I expected you from the town, not from up the river."

A moment after Kyd sprang upon the deck, and was followed by Lennox, who quickly had the boat hanging at the davits.

"Well, sir, how came you to run above the fort?" asked Kyd of the officer he had left in charge.

"I saw and heard there was something going wrong in the town, captain, and didn't wish to be raked by yonder fort and the Rondeel too, so ran up here and have been standing off and on; besides, sir, a friend of yours from the city came out and told me it was the wisest course."

"A friend of mine? Why, my trusty blade is my only friend, sir; who has been making a fool of you?" said the chief, sternly.

"I hope no one, captain; I felt something was going wrong, for the town is greatly excited, and a lad pulled out to us and asked for you; finding you were not on board, he said that it would be best for the brigantine to run up above the fort, so she'd have the open Sound ahead of her, for it was reported that Captain Kyd, the Devil of the Sea, was in the city, and they were looking for him then."

"And where is this lad?"

"I thought it best to detain him, sir, until you came; he is in the cabin now."

"You did right," and Kyd strode toward the cabin, and entering, beheld a youth arise, and advance toward him in an embarrassed way.

He seemed scarcely more than sixteen, was

attired in the rig of an ordinary sailor, but wore a soft hat pulled down over his eyes.

Well formed he certainly was, and his face was fearless and every feature perfect.

"My lad, you came on board to do me a service, my officer informs me," said the chief, pleasantly, at the same time gazing admiringly upon the handsome youth.

The face flushed, and the lips trembled visibly; but, with an effort controlling his emotion, he answered:

"Yes, if you are the one whom men call The Kyd, I came to serve you."

"Yes, men call me The Kyd, the Devil of the Sea, the Curse of the Coast, the Ocean Wizard, and any other vile name that suits their fancy," the chief answered.

"And have not your crimes won those names?" was the frank question, and it caused Kyd to start, and eye more closely his visitor.

"Ay, they have; a cruel fate, the inheritance of a curse, made me turn my back upon honor, and from this day I shall turn my face against all mercy; but you are full bold, young sir, to question me."

"I meant no harm; I came to say to you that it is known that you are in the town, that you visited the Governor's mansion, yet why is not known; you have been seen in the streets by those who know you well, and now searching for you are sixty of the crew of the cutter, divided into squads, and determined to find you, while the gates are manned—"

"Ha! ha! ha! and by such worthy Dutch heroes as I found them?" laughed Kyd.

"There are good citizens at the gates now, and at the guns of the forts, and companies are forming for protection, for it is expected you meditate a landing."

"No, my schooner is far down the bay, and I have but thirty-five men here with me on the brigantine," and pacing once across the cabin and back, he continued:

"You say that sixty of the cutter's crew are ashore?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Captain Clement St. Vane?"

"Is at the White Hall, the home of the Governor."

"My lad, I have half a mind to seize the cutter at her anchorage, and cut her out, leaving the brigantine for my gallant Captain St. Vane, and if Governor Fletcher were the Executive here instead of the Earl of Belmont, I would give these good people of Nieuwe Amsterdam a scare that would make them long remember Kyd."

The last of what he had spoken seemed more to himself than addressed to the youth; but the latter said, inquiringly:

"You seem friendly toward the Earl of Belmont, Captain Kyd?"

"I have had cause to be; the earl and his kindred I can never harm or wrong; but why, may I ask, have you taken the interest in me to come out to this brigantine alone to warn me of danger?" and Kyd bent his piercing eyes upon the face of the lad, who flushed, yet responded without hesitation:

"From the same motive that you would wish to serve the Earl of Belmont; but it matters not what my motives may be, Captain Kyd."

Enough that I warn you of danger, for ere long you will be ordered to do service you cannot do, and it will be discovered that you have taken the brigantine, and are not Lord Manly Meredith, its commander."

"Ha! you advise well; but for your warning how can I reward you?"

"Haul down your black flag, cast the past and its crimes to the winds, and live in the future a different life."

The youth spoke with unexpected earnestness; but the lip of the corsair curled, as he replied:

"You will have to go unrewarded, then, for my life of evil is yet in its infancy, and the whole world shall yet dread the name of Kyd; by the Cross! but I will carry out my thought, seize the cutter and leave Captain St. Vane this brigantine in exchange, and she is as fleet as the wind—"

"No, no, no, you will not do this."

"Ha! I admit of no remonstrance, boy; I will do it, for I wish a king's cruiser to make a voyage in I have in mind, and my beautiful Galley Slave needs overhauling and refitting, and it shall be done; now, my brave lad, if you don't wish to sail under a sable flag, I would advise you to return, but if you care to put a noose around your neck and sail with Kyd, you shall have the opportunity, and you belie your looks if you will not soon win promotion."

"Thank you, sir, I will never sink so low as to become a pirate."

"By the Cross, but you are bold; here, I like you, and I would protect you, so wear this in memory of Kyd."

As the chief spoke he stepped to a small ebony desk, inlaid with gold, and took from it a trinket. It was a blood-red stone, carved in the semblance of a heart, and through it was sticking a gold arrow, on which was engraven:

"Respect this pledge—Kyd."

It was just such a one as the Long Island skipper had spoken of receiving at the hands of Kyd.

"Wear this, my lad, should you go to sea, and you will find it a pledge of safety to you and yours, no matter what bold sea rover you may meet."

The youth took the trinket, while Kyd, taking a gold chain of rare workmanship from the desk, attached the charm and fastened it around the slender neck of his handsome visitor, who said, in a voice that trembled:

"Farewell, Captain Kyd; I would to Heaven Fate had led you in a different path; but I will never forget you, be you what you may."

The corsair grasped the small hand in farewell, and in another moment the young lad was in his light boat, rowing back to the shore.

"Lennox, get the men ready for boarding; put the brigantine under easy sail, and stand down past the city."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the lieutenant, wondering what mad freak was in the mind of his captain, yet knowing better than to ask.

"There is a boat coming out from the shore, sir," he said, an instant after.

"Ay, ay; boat ahoy!" sung out Kyd.

"Ho, the brigantine!" came the answer.

"What do you wish? I command this vessel."

"The Earl of Belmont, Governor of the province, sends his compliments, and requests that you stand up the Sound and search for the pirate craft, Galley Slave, and to fire three shots in rapid succession if you discover the vessel, and the cutter will come to your aid," was shouted in clear tones from the boat.

"Ay, ay, sir; but present the compliments of Captain Kyd to the Earl of Belmont, and say that immediate business calls me to sea, and that I exchange this brigantine for his cutter, but that I will return it in a few months in good order."

"Who did you say, sir?" asked the voice from the boat, apparently not fully understanding the name.

"I said Captain Kyd, the Ocean Wizard."

The dip of the oars in the water, and the order, given excitedly, to row for the shore, were distinctly heard on the brigantine, and away darted the boat at a terrific speed for the nearest point of land, while Kyd, with a light laugh, returned to the cabin as the fleet vessel began to move through the waters, her sharp prow pointed down-stream, and, with tide and wind in her favor, she sped along at a race-horse pace.

But at the cabin door Kyd stooped and picked up something white.

It was a dainty kerchief, richly embroidered and perfumed, and he examined it curiously, while his eyes fell upon something that sent the blood rushing from his dark face.

"Great God! it is the crest of Greyhurst Castle—ay, and here is the name, delicately embroidered in the corner—Lady Grace! By the Cross! I recall that face now, and know who was the youth. Ay, it was Lady Grace, of Greyhurst Castle, in old Ireland."

"If a prayer on my lips were not mockery, I would say God bless her for that act; but it maddens me to think what I was, might have been, and am," and, raising his voice, he cried:

"Ho, Yambo!"

An Arab slave instantly appeared.

"Get my effects together, and follow me on board the cutter."

"Yes, Sidi, thy slave will obey," was the humble answer of the servant, and Kyd went on deck and found the brigantine fairly flying down the river, and, not half a mile away, beheld the hull and tapering spars of the cutter he had so boldly determined to cut out of her anchorage.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CUTTER AND THE BRIGANTINE.

WHEN the crew of the brigantine saw their commander come on deck, they felt there was to be some desperate deed performed, for he wore his boarding helmet, and was thoroughly armed; but that he intended, with his small force, thirty-five men besides himself, to attempt to carry the cutter they had no idea, as they knew not that sixty of the hundred seamen of the Bloodhound were on shore looking for the very personage who was then planning such a daring move against them.

"Boarders ahoy! stand ready all to follow me on board yonder cutter!"

The chief spoke in a low, deep tone, yet it reached the ear of every man, and though knowing the desperate courage of their commander, they started at this order, some of them even not moving to obey.

"Did ye hear, bouds! Stand ready to follow me on the cutter, for I shall exchange this craft for that one."

They understood now fully, and yet there was no demurring, for already had the news spread that Kyd had gone to the Sorcerers of Hell Gate, and received from her the pledge of success in his undertakings, and an amulet against harm, and not one of the superstitious pirates doubted the power of old Zebel to give immunity from all evil, as also to bring blight and death upon those she wished.

Taking the helm himself, Kyd gave such orders as were necessary for the arrangements of the sails, and when near the cutter hailed in a loud voice, which reached the ears of hundreds

assembled upon the shore, and those in the forts, as well as the one he intended it for:

"Ho! the Bloodhound, ho!"

"Ay, ay, the brigantine!" answered an officer on the cutter.

"I bring you news of The Kyd; he has just come down from Hell Gate! I will lay alongside and see you."

"It is best that you lay to and we will send a boat for you," replied the officer; but back came the haughty reply:

"My helmsman knows his duty, sir."

In a low tone the chief then told the crouching crew, awaiting like tigers to spring on their prey, to be ready, and with a skill that won the admiration of those on the cutter, he laid the brigantine alongside the Bloodhound, and grappels were thrown, to the surprise of the officer and men of the king's craft.

"Boarders away! follow me!"

With yells like fiends the ready crew followed their daring leader upon the decks of the Bloodhound, and instantly a scene ensued which pen cannot describe. For the surprised cutter men, taken wholly off their guard, suspected no danger until the cutlasses of the corsairs and the ringing shots were in their midst.

Sweeping aft irresistibly, strewing the decks with dead and wounded, The Kyd and his desperate crew cut down readily the opposition of the rallying seamen of the Bloodhound, and gained the quarter-deck.

"Ho! the Rondeel! help from the shore, or the cutter's lost! The Kyd has boarded us!" cried the officer in command of the cutter, while he fought bravely to stem the fierce onslaught.

And his cry was taken up by the amazed crowd, and hundreds fled for their lives, to seek the shelter of their substantial stone mansions, while others more courageous and patriotic, hastily called for volunteers to go out in boats to the aid of the struggling cutter men.

Like lightning the news of the combat flew through the town, the Governor, and all at the mansion capable of bearing arms, hastened to the rescue, but alas! too late, for, as Clement St. Vane and a dozen boats' crews put off from the shore, there was heard a heavy splash, and the brigantine's anchor was dropped, the grappels were thrown back on board, the crew of dead, dying and wounded were hustled off of the cutter, and the tide and wind swept the two vessels apart.

"Up into the rigging there, ye dogs of the sea, and let fall her canvas! To the guns there, a score of you!" rung out the stern orders of The Kyd, and away down the harbor flew the king's captured cruiser, just as Clement St. Vane and about half of his men that had been scattered through the city, boarded the brigantine.

And a fearful sight met their gaze, for a score of men lay dead, as many more, like those that were slain, were piled up in a heap, just as the pirates had thrown them on board, and the remaining few were huddled together under their officers' command, thoroughly dazed by the sudden and successful attack upon them by a vessel they had believed an armed merchant-craft.

"Here! do not stand there like statues, but to those guns! ship that stern pivot forward! spring over, and we'll yet punish yonder pirate!"

It was Clement St. Vane's ringing voice that broke the spell, and every man sprung to his post of duty.

"Ho the shore! send me volunteers! A hundred gallant fellows and we take back the cruiser, and The Kyd with her."

The words of the dashing young officer were received with a cheer from the shore, and there came back in the well-known voice of the Earl of Belmont:

"Bravo, St. Vane! I'll board you within a few minutes with the men you need."

The crew of the cutter, but now of the brigantine, answered with a cheer, and again was the voice of the young captain heard:

"Turn that gun upon the cruiser, men! lively there, lads, with that stern pivot gun! bring her forward with a rush; stand by to raise that anchor and set sail, and we'll soon be in the wake of yonder bold buccaneer," and raising his voice he continued:

"Ho the Rondeel! are you all asleep, that you let yonder pirate go without a shot?"

"Blow him out of the water, if you can, but for Heaven's sake! be in a hurry!"

This stern reminder brought the officers of the Rondeel to their senses, and a gun boomed forth from the fort, just as the heavy piece on the brigantine's bow, sent an iron messenger after the flying cruiser.

But evidently anxious to protect his rigging, The Kyd held in toward the wooded shores of Governor's Island, and placed that barrier between him and harm.

A few moments after, however, he appeared, under a tremendous pressure of canvas, rushing down the harbor at a speed that caused Clement St. Vane to cry out:

"Yonder Devil of the Sea is a born sailor, for he can take a lugger and outsail a yacht, I verily believe; see how he makes the Bloodhound fly—ha, my lord, I greet you; now we can go in chase," and as the young captain spoke the

Earl of Belmont bounded upon the deck of the brigantine, and behind him came full a hundred men.

"Bravo! what we lack in guns we can make up in crew, and carry the pirate by boarding, for, if I mistake not, this brigantine is as fleet as a bird."

"Cut loose those boats! up with that anchor! now spread her from deck to truck with canvas!"

As Clement St. Vane spoke the brigantine's bows swung round, and with a cheer from her crew, and which was answered from the Rondeel and crowds on shore, the graceful vessel darted away in pursuit of the daring Kyd, so well named the Ocean Wizard.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MESSAGE FROM THE SEA.

WHATEVER might have been the opinion of Clement St. Vane, regarding the sailing qualities of the cutter under his command, prior to the night of her capture by Kyd, he certainly was astonished at the speed the pirate chief forced her into in flying down the harbor, for she seemed to fly rather than sail, and was gradually dropping her pursuer.

"My lord, yonder devil is well named when men call him the Ocean Wizard, for the Bloodhound is making as much out of this ten-knot breeze, as she ever did in a gale," said the young captain, between the boom of the two pivot-guns on the brigantine's bow, and which were alternately pouring a heavy fire after the escaping vessel.

"He is a wonderful man, St. Vane; but what a daring deed this last one of his, for this is the relief ship, and she had already fallen into his power," answered the earl.

"It was a clever trick of Kyd's, my lord, and he deceived us all; by the Lord Harry! I'll never hold up my head again, if I do not retake the cutter," answered the captain dolefully.

"It certainly was not your fault, St. Vane, as who would have suspected that even Kyd would boldly run into New York harbor in a captured vessel, and then as daringly board and take the Bloodhound—by the king's crown! but that shot tumbled upon his decks," and the earl and St. Vane bent their gaze earnestly upon the deck of the flying vessel, now over a mile ahead; but if damage was done to either the Bloodhound or her crew, there was no apparent excitement on board to show it visible to the eyes of those who fondly hoped for such a result.

And thus the chase continued until the Narrows were passed, and the Bloodhound headed directly for the open sea, while she steadily gained upon the brigantine, whose fire from the pivot-guns, though readily kept up, had done no material damage it was evident.

"It seems that the Ocean Wizard has begun his incantations, my lord, for there sweeps up an ugly storm to aid him," suddenly said Clement St. Vane, pointing over the Highlands of Neversink, above which were rapidly rolling dark storm-clouds, that threatened to soon shut out the light of the moon, and send a sweeping gale over the land and sea.

"You are right, St. Vane, and as it will be an ugly night, and there seems no hope of catching the pirate, I think we had better put back for the city, for see, our shots are falling short now," responded the earl.

"I am content, sir, for he certainly is dropping us; but I am surprised that he has not once fired upon us."

"It seems strange indeed; there is some deep mystery connected with that man, St. Vane, and I hope to one day unravel it, for he refused to fire upon my colors when crossing over, you remember—left the cruiser, as soon as he recognized me, and—in fact I cannot fathom it."

"Nor I, my lord; but I hope to do so for you one of these days, as properly trimmed and rigged this brigantine is I believe faster, or at least as fast, as the Bloodhound, and there are sufficient good guns in the town to man her with a first-class battery, so that we can be at sea in a week or two, once more on the track of the Ocean Wizard."

"By King Billy! as the sailors say, you are right, St. Vane; but is not that a light on the water, in the wake of the pirate?"

Clement St. Vane checked the order upon his lips to put the brigantine about, and gazed in the direction of the pirate.

"You are right, my lord; it is a boat, and has a lantern in it; we will stand on and pick it up, for doubtless The Kyd has left us a farewell message."

The brigantine held rapidly on, and it was not long before she rounded to, and lowered a boat, for adrift on the waters was a small yawl, and hanging to a spar in the center was a battle-lantern.

The boat secured the little yawl, and returned to the Bloodhound and handed the lantern to Captain St. Vane, who smilingly said:

"I was right in my prophecy, my lord; come, sir, we will go into the cabin and see what the Ocean Wizard says."

Giving an order to his lieutenant to crowd on all sail back to the town, Clement St. Vane entered the cabin of the brigantine, bearing the lantern in his hand, and followed by the earl.

An examination of the lantern discovered a small piece of paper attached, and unfolding it, Clement St. Vane read aloud:

"CORSAIR CUTTER BLOODHOUND—Off Sandy Hook."

"To CAPTAIN CLEMENT ST. VANE, Commanding H. M. KING WILLIAM THE THIRD'S Brigantine of War, FLYING CLOUD—GREETING:"

"It having come to my knowledge that the Buccaneer League of the Atlantic coast are meditating a descent upon the town of New York, and adjacent rich villages and towns, I would suggest that the Rondeel and eastern and western forts be strengthened, and that *English* (not *Dutch*) officers be placed in charge, to prevent surprise and annihilation from the Free Skimmers of the Sea, who will bring to the attack no mean force to contend against."

"The time of the attack, as nearly as I can discover, will be not sooner than two months, and within three."

"I request that the information thus given be made known only to the Earl of Belmont, as also the source from whence it comes remain a secret."

"Should Captain St. Vane desire to find me, and retake his very staunch and beautiful vessel, my home is upon blue waters."

"KYD OF THE BLACK PLUME."

"Well, my lord, what do you think of this wonderful letter?" asked the young captain, in amazement, after he had twice read it aloud.

"I shall take his advice, for I have heard that the buccaneers of this coast and the Indies were leagued together, and you know they have already descended upon the Spanish town of St. Augustine and raided it."

"True, my lord; but I have also heard that Kyd was the acknowledged Chief Admiral of the League; can he intend to betray them, with a hope of pardon from King William for himself?"

"I know not, yet it would seem so; if he does, and we beat them off, crime-stained as he is, I can get him a pardon; but, certain it is, I shall follow the suggestion of this strange man, and New York shall become a fortified camp, and I will arm and equip several of the smaller merchant vessels in part, and give them under your command."

"You honor me, my lord; but hark! how that gale howls; suppose we return to the deck," and the captain led the way, to find the gale upon them, and seaward nowhere visible was the captured Bloodhound.

But the brigantine now demanded all the attention of the young commander, as the storm raged furiously, shutting out from sight the lamps of the distant town; but the staunch craft held on her way, and in an hour's time dropped anchor off the Rondeel, and just in time to prevent being fired upon from the over-zealous soldiers, who mistook her for the famous corsair coming to pay them another warlike visit.

"*Pfuy Tyfel!* if you don't vas trop dat tam mood hook in te pottom of te vater, I vas about to plow you schip mit te sky," said the valiant Dutch commander of the Rondeel, as he met the boat, containing the earl and St. Vane, at the landing; but he subsided, when the earl said dryly:

"You had a rare opportunity to do the same with the pirate, Captain Von Dusen, but missed it from some reason; but I warn you that the day of lax discipline in this fort has passed," and the Governor walked on toward the mansion, accompanied by Clement St. Vane, who gladly accepted his invitation to go with him, as he longed to see a pair of bright eyes, and hear what a pair of ruby lips had to say about his losing his cruiser, and failure to recapture her from the daring Kyd.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MEETING ON THE BLUFF.

THE sun rose in an unclouded sky, the morning after the bold deed of the corsair, in cutting out the cutter from beneath the very guns of the Rondeel, and with the approach of daylight the good citizens of New York felt more courageous, after the terrible scare they had had under the shadow of night.

Remembering the strange warning given him by Kyd, the Earl of Belmont at once assembled his officers, and the prominent citizens around him, and made known his intention of thoroughly fortifying the town and its approaches, and the deed of the night before having shown how utterly defenseless they were against attack, all were most anxious to aid him in the good work to be done.

With Captain St. Vane, and several officers and citizens, the Governor rode around the town, ordered the river forts to be strengthened by half a dozen heavy guns each the fortifications to be improved, and a regularly drilled company to be kept constantly on duty.

The gates had a breastwork thrown up about thirty feet in their front, and upon each side was mounted a twelve-pound howitzer, while here also a detachment of soldiers were to be kept constantly on duty.

Next came the Rondeel, which was enlarged, had its armament trebled, and was made the head center of the military of the town, while it was placed under an official commander.*

As all the able-bodied citizens were drilled in the manual of arms, the stalwart Dutchmen were rendered more than miserable, as they

* See early History of New York, or Nieuwe Amsterdham.—THE AUTHOR.

could not idle the time away as before in drinking Scheitani, cans of ale, smoking their long pipes, and frightening themselves with the superstitious gossip of the age.

A trim-looking brig, and a Long Island coaster were chartered by the Governor, and under the supervision of Clement St. Vane were armed and manned with five guns and forty men each, while the brigantine was overhauled and prepared thoroughly, from keel to truck, and fitted out with a fine battery and arms of all kinds, which she brought over in her hold, to be put upon a craft of Yankee build, and which Kyd had not disturbed during the time she was in his possession.

In making all these warlike preparations a month or more passed away, and, as the Kyd had neither been seen by incoming craft, or heard of along the coast, the Dutch burghers congratulated themselves that they had frightened him off, or that he had gone down in the gale that swept the sea, the night he captured the Bloodhound.

As soon as the brigantine was completely refitted, Captain St. Vane had invited the earl and his family to take a short cruise in her, and in a run out to sea and back, and then up the Sound half a dozen leagues, all had pronounced themselves delighted with the beautiful vessel, and her commander was confident that she was faster than the Bloodhound, and hoped one day to prove his ability to retake the cruiser.

One afternoon, some five weeks after the night of Kyd's daring escapade, Lady Kate and Lady Grace started for a horseback ride, and alone, for they declined all escort.

Passing out of the city gates, they galloped rapidly along the road leading to King's Farms, turned into Maiden Lane, and refreshing their horses with a drink from the spring, that then bubbled up from the pleasant silvan retreat, they dashed along the river path, evidently with some idea in view.

Arriving at the bluff overhanging the East river, where now stand brown-stone mansions, they drew rein and gazed over the grand scene before them.

Below them half a hundred feet rushed the river, and beyond was the island, with further on the foaming waters of Hell Gate, that swept madly by what was only a few years ago, known as Witch's Isle, and then the desolate and wild abiding place of Zebel the Sorceress and her strange companions.

Far beyond lay the green shores and rolling hills of Long Island, and to their left the glimmering waters of the Sound, here and there dotted with a fisher-boat homeward bound before the shadows of night would fall upon them in passing through Hell Gate, where the Sorceress was dreaded as much, if not more, than the dangerous channel.

"Do you think she will come, Grace?" asked Lady Kate, upon whose beautiful face now rested a dreamy look of sadness.

"She will come, for she promised me; see! there is her boat rounding the island now," answered Lady Kate, pointing at the same time with her whip to where a little craft with a tiny sail was visible stretching boldly across the river.

"I see her; but do you think she can tell us whether he went down that fearful night in the storm?"

"She professes the power, and why should she not have it? you know the wizards and witches of Ireland have told strange truths, Kate," answered Lady Grace, who was not free from believing in the necromancy of the times.

"I hope so; if I knew that he was dead, I believe that I would be almost happy again; but oh! Grace, to think that he whom we both knew as a humble fisher lad, one whom you knew had a heart as tender as a woman's, should be the cruel monster the world calls him," and Lady Kate hastily brushed a tear from her eyes, while her lips quivered.

"It is strange, Kate, that he above all others should have won such a name; but his life has had some bitterness we know not of to drive him to crime, and he speaks of himself as accursed; oh! what a name he would have made for himself as a man of honor, as for Kyd, the Ocean Wizard, he has caused the very world to tremble."

"And should he return, with all the strength of our forts, our drilled soldiers, and extra vessels of war, he will drop anchor in our very harbor, ay, under our very guns, does he so desire, and it is this that makes me tremble at dread of him; but come, let us ride down to the shore and meet the Sorceress, for she will arrive there as we do."

They gave another admiring glance over the fair scene, and then rode slowly down the path leading to the shores, where they drew rein upon the bank, just as the skiff of Zebel the Sorceress touched it.

Springing out, she took a turn with the painter around a small tree, and faced the maidens, both of whom gazed upon her with a certain awe.

"I am here at your desire; what would you

with Zebel, the Sorceress of Hell Gate?" she asked quietly.

Lady Kate tried to speak, but words failed her, and Lady Grace said:

"When I met you on the Bowline Green, Zebel, I asked you to meet us here, for we desire knowledge of one, of whom your arts will doubtless enable you to tell us."

"Yes, the noble ladies of the Castle of Cor and Greyhurst, would know of Kyd the Ocean Wizard," she answered with a sneer, and both maidens paled slightly at her words, while Lady Kate said in a suppressed tone:

"I believe that you do indeed possess supernatural powers to read our thoughts thus, strange woman."

"I can read more, Kate of Castle Cor, for I see in your heart the image of Kenton Cavanaugh which the reddened visage of Kyd the Corsair has never obliterated."

Lady Kate bowed her head into her hands until they rested upon her saddle pommel, but made no reply, and the Sorceress turned to Lady Grace:

"Your secret I will not tear the veil from, Grace of Greyhurst, for I owe to you more than I can ever repay; but what is it you would know of him whom men call the Ocean Wizard?"

"I would know if he be dead?" said Lady Grace, whose face had flushed crimson at the reference of the Sorceress to her secret.

"That I must find out; would you know, come with me to my island yonder—"

"No, no, no," cried Lady Kate in alarm.

"Then I can tell thee naught; go to my island and I will see what the stars say of Kyd."

"It is bright sunshine now, woman, and the stars—"

"Bah! I read the stars by day, as I can the sunlight in the darkest night; would you know, you must come."

"I will go, Kate, if you do not fear to remain here," said Lady Grace with utter fearlessness.

"And I will accompany you, for I dare not remain here; but our horses?"

"They will be safe, for I will leave my wand," and the Sorceress sprang into her boat and drew out the staff, on one end of which was the infant's skull, and upon the other the lock of long hair.

This she suspended to the tree, to which she hitched the two horses, saying:

"They all hereabout know my wand; the vilest horse-thief would never come near these animals; get in, and do not fear, for my boat is not upheld by mortal means."

With a shudder the maidens sat down in the skiff amidst the wind seized the sail, and away over the waters they sped, the Sorceress at the tiller, and her face as calm as though she held not three lives in her keeping.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ANSWER.

BRAVE hearts as had both Lady Kate and Lady Grace, they were appalled by the dangers of Hell Gate, when they rushed along in the tiny little skiff, though they had before passed through the seething channel in the trial trip on the brigantine, and then found it a fearful gantlet to run.

But the Sorceress threw around them some wraps she carried in her boat to keep them from being drenched by the spray, and boldly steered through the most dangerous parts of the passage, as though glorying in the dangers she faced, and had the skill and nerve to master.

"And this is the way you come and go to your desolate home?" asked Lady Kate, in real admiration of the strange woman.

"Yes. I dare this place in storm and calm, by day and night; it is fittingly named the Gate to Hell, and a fitting home have I for a witch, with the roar of the waters ever in my ears; ha! ha! ha! but it's rare old times I have here, maidens."

As she spoke the Sorceress ran her little skiff into the inlet, or cove, at the head of the island, and where Kyd's boat had awaited him the night of his visit there.

"Come! you are welcome to Zebel's home, Lady Kate, of Castle Cor, and Lady Grace, of Greyhurst," and the woman sprang ashore, while Grace, as the two followed her, remarked:

"It is not my first visit to your home, Zebel, though I cannot tell which is the most to be dreaded—this place or Castle Death."

"I have not forgotten, maiden, that you rode to Castle Death alone that night, to save old Zebel from the bounds that were on her path and would have burned her at a stake, because she knew what their brains could not comprehend. No, Zebel, the Sorceress, never forgets a favor done her, or forgives a wrong; but come, let me lead you to my hovel, for the sun will be near its setting by the time you reach the gates of the town."

In a few moments they approached the cabin, and the bay of the bloodhound greeted them; but a word from the Sorceress and he crouched down, while the parrot and the monkey, in the adjoining room, ceased their chattering.

Bidding the maidens be seated, an honor they shrunk from when they beheld the skeleton chairs, the Sorceress entered the adjoining

chamber, closing the door behind her, while in very horror her two visitors gazed around them at the weird scene.

Soon the door opened, and the Sorceress appeared, dressed as she was when performing the incantatory rites for Kyd, and with the wand of necromancy in her hand.

"Come! be silent, except ask what you would know; stand there!"

They obeyed in silence, the door was closed, and they found themselves in utter darkness.

A moment of suspense and the hound broke forth in his long, dismal howl, and then above them, on the roof, they saw what appeared to be the heavens at night, for the dark blue of the sky was gemmed with innumerable stars.

A dim light now pervaded the room, as though from the stars, and the Sorceress was visible kneeling before the altar.

Suddenly she chanted forth in a voice, strangely dissimilar to her ordinary tone:

"The stain of crime—the stain of crime,
Glows in immortal colors there!
Not e'en the coursing flood of Time
Can make that foulest plague-spot fair.
Her love was thine; it would have stood
The test of years—of base birth even:
But thine own hand, imbrued in blood
Hath shut to thee both Earth and Heaven:
Away! away! there flows 'tween love and thee
The dark, deep ocean of Eternity."

She paused, and both the maidens seemed to feel that she had been communing with the spirit of Kyd, so *apropos* were her words; and they trembled for fear he might indeed be dead; and yet, far rather would they have had him dead than what he was; such is the contradiction of woman's nature.

A moment of silence followed, and again she broke forth in her wild chant:

"He bears a charmed life! O'er earth and sea
No fiend so feared, no being dread as he."

An instant she waved her arms wildly above her head, and then clutching her wand in her right hand she held it pointing upward, and cried in ringing tones:

"Spirit of the Air, I command thee tell me of the Black Plume."

A moment of deathlike silence, and then came in deep sepulchral tones, as though from above:

"The winds blow fair! the vessel feels
The pressure of the rising breeze:
And, swiftest of a thousand keels,
She leaps o'er the careening seas."

"Ha! he lives then! Now, Spirit of the Air, how heads his vessel?" cried the Sorceress; and again the deep tones were heard:

"Hitherward o'er the ocean waves:
Hitherward to make new graves."

The two maidens shuddered, and in spite of herself, a cry broke from the lips of Lady Kate. Instantly the room was flooded with light, the darkness disappearing as if by magic, and facing them the Sorceress said:

"You broke the charm; but you heard enough: Kyd lives, and his vessel is heading for these shores."

"I thank thee, Zebel: wilt take this in remembrance of Lady Kate of Belmont?" and she held out a silken purse, heavy with gold.

"No, Kate of Belmont, I need not thy gold; but come, the sun is racing for the west, and I would not have darkness overtake ye, or the cowardly Dutch soldiers at the city gates would fire on ye for pirates, spooks, or mayhap for Zebel the Sorceress, and perchance accident might cause them to send a bullet into your fair bodies. Come, let us return."

She led the way back to the skiff, and after again daring the dangers of Hell Gate, they arrived at the Manhattan Island shore, and found their faithful steeds patiently awaiting them.

"Farewell, Zebel; I thank thee for thy kindness, and hope some day to return it," said Lady Kate.

"Thy kinswoman there has returned it a thousand-fold; farewell!" and the Sorceress shoved off in her boat, while the cousins, silent and deeply impressed by their strange visit, started back for the city at a rapid pace, and, as Zebel had feared, came very near drawing the fire of the stalwart guard upon them as they dashed up at a quick trot in the gathering twilight.

"Open your gates, soldier, we would enter," said Kate of Belmont, haughtily, to the two worthies on duty while their officer and comrades in arms had slipped away for a glass of scheitani at the Jost Stall Inn.

"It pe after soondown," replied the Dutch soldier.

"I care not; we are Lady Kate of Belmont and Lady Grace of Greyhurst; so open thy gates."

"It ish petter ash I don't—eh, Hanse?"

"Tat ish so; we vill pe shot if ve do," answered Hanse.

"Ant pe hanged mit a rope," replied the other.

"Dat ish so; it ish petter ash you go away ant coom pack mit te soon up," called out Hanse to the maidens.

"Knaves! do you not know we belong to the Governor's household? How dare you refuse us entrance?" angrily said Lady Kate, while Lady Grace laughed, rather enjoying the scene.

"It ish petter dat you pe on te outschide."

"Dat ish so; voomans makes troobles inschide ant oudt: ve ish inschide, and tish petter ash you pes outschide," was the philosophical remark of Hanse.

And there the maidens sat on their horses, half angry, half laughing, at the stupidity of the guard, who left unheeded their request to send for their officer, or comrades, while the gloom gathered around them.

But at last, through the darkness was heard a quick step, and then a harsh voice said:

"Cowards! ale-kegs! who is it ye keep without the gates?"

"It is Zebel the Sorceress!" said Lady Kate, in a tone of joy.

But, if she and Lady Grace felt joy at the approach of the Sorceress, the Dutch warriors felt wholly to the contrary, for dropping their guns they took to their heels, while, with a mocking laugh, Zebel unbarred the gates, exhibiting a strength that surprised the maidens, and bidding them enter, replaced the heavy bar in its grooves once more.

"I landed at the shore some time since, and not seeing you pass, knew you must be detained by those idiots. It would behoove your noble father, Lady Kate of Castle Cor, to keep better men on duty, for Kyd, the Ocean Wizard, is not the only one he need fear, as other buccannere have their eyes on the treasures of New York."

Before reply could be made the Sorceress glided, rather than walked away, and the maidens rode rapidly on to the White Hall, where they found the earl and his servants about to start out on a search for them.

In a few words, without telling of their visit to the Sorceress, they made known that they were detained at the gates, until rescued from their predicament by old Zebel whose strange warning they also told, and then sought their rooms, quite nervous after their afternoon of adventure.

CHAPTER XX.

A PIRATE'S HONOR.

THOUGH many really believe it, and still more fondly hoped, that Kyd the Ocean Wizard had gone to the bottom in the cruiser he had so brilliantly captured, their beliefs and their hopes were false, for, after seeing that the brigantine had put back to the city, having picked up the boat he left adrift in his wake, he boldly returned into the lower bay, headed across the Horse-Shoe above Sandy Hook, and now ran for shelter under the lofty Highlands of Neversink, where he rode out in safety the storm.

But when the gale had piped itself out, the anchor was raised, and the cruiser began to beat up what is now known as the Sorensbury river, not the branch that spreads into Pleasure Bay, but that winds through the high and densely-wooded shores to the north.

Into a small cove, a league above the Highlands, the cutter glided, where the water was as placid as a mill-pond, and where, revealed against the dark wooded shores, were visible the outlines of a vessel.

"Ahoy! answer or take our broadside!" suddenly called out a voice in the gloom, and Kyd, who was at the helm of the cutter answered promptly:

"The Slave!"

This reply seemed satisfactory, for the cruiser glided slowly alongside of the vessel moored to the shore, and springing upon the latter's deck, the chief was confronted by a stout, heavily-bearded man, who said bluntly:

"Welcome back, Captain Kyd; but for a moment I thought we were surprised, as I was looking to see you return in the brigantine."

"I made an exchange for the Bloodhound, as you see, Hanlon; but I am glad to find you on the alert."

"I don't rest well o' nights, captain, with a noose of a rope chafing my neck, you know," said the lieutenant significantly.

"It is best not to, for there is no telling how soon the rope may be drawn taut; but have you any news?"

"None, sir, not a soul has been near us, and, as you directed, in daylight I keep scouts out, so as to signal us should any one come in sound of our axes."

"And the work, Hanlon?"

"Is progressing slowly, sir; there is a great deal to do to the schooner, for she has had some hard knocks in the past year."

"Well, do not hurry, but perform all your work thoroughly, and I will leave you some spars and rigging from the cruiser to aid you, and give you six weeks or two months, for I sail across the sea."

"Across the sea, captain?" asked Hanlon in surprise.

"Yes, I have business that calls me there."

"Some deadly work to be done, I'll wager."

"Why I go does not in anyway concern you, or the crew, Hanlon; I shall cross under everything that will draw, and return the same way, and, as Zebel the Sorceress has pledged me good winds, and I remain on the other shore but a day, or night, perhaps, you may expect me back very soon; so have the schooner in perfect order from keel to truck, and what she needs in arms and guns I will bring with me."

"And I must remain here, captain!"

"Yes, unless driven to sea by being discovered; in that case run from anything that carries a flag, and run to Montauk Point, where I will hunt you, if I do not find you here—do you understand, Hanlon?"

"I do, Captain Kyd."

"It is well; now send my prisoner on board the cutter, and the boxes of treasure too."

"Hold, captain! it looks as if you were going to run away with the treasure and spend it in foreign lands, leaving me and the men with me to be caught in a trap," said the pirate lieutenant with angry suspicion; but the words had not left his lips hardly, before he would have given worlds to recall them, for like a trumpet rung Kyd's voice:

"What! ho! do you dare question the honor of Kyd, thou bound of Hell! Ho, Lennox, a halyard here for this devil's neck."

"Mercy! oh mercy! my captain! I was mad to doubt your honor! for the love of God! I pray thee mercy," and the frightened lieutenant dropped on his knees and grasped the hand of his chief, covering it with kisses in his fear of death.

But as well might he have kissed a stone, and appealed to an iron heart for mercy, for like a statue stood Kyd, awaiting the execution of his orders.

A moment more and Lennox approached with a halyard.

"Tie that hound's hands and feet, and place a noose around his neck," was the stern command.

Lennox unhesitatingly attempted to obey, when driven to madness the lieutenant sprang upon him, determined to resist until the last.

"Throw yourselves upon him, some of you! don't hurt him, for heshall hang," yelled Kyd, and three or four of his crew instantly obeyed.

But the pirate lieutenant was a powerful man, and fighting with desperation hurled his assailants from him.

"Stand aside all!"

The men fell back and Kyd threw himself upon the doomed man.

Then followed a short but terrible struggle, and down to the deck went the lieutenant, and the chief said sternly:

"Bind him now!"

It was quickly done by the men.

"Now put the end of that rope around his neck, and run him up to the yard-arm of the schooner," came the stern command, and as promptly was it obeyed, the men singing with the utmost indifference the sailor's chorus of "Heave yo! heave yo!"

"Heave the halyard short!" cried Kyd, unmindful of the cries of his victim that had echoed against the wooded shores, until the taut rope around his neck had cut off his appeals for mercy.

A moment the dark form swayed wildly in midair, all standing in silence gazing upon it, and then the chief said aloud:

"Yonder corpse doubted the honor of Kyd! Is there another man on board this schooner who dares now doubt the honor of Kyd, pirate though I be?"

Not a voice answered, and after waiting an instant, the chief resumed:

"Mr. Lennox, I make you second officer in place of Hanlon, and I leave you in command of the schooner; you know my wishes fully, so have the pretty craft ready by my return; if you have to fly from here await me at Montauk; do you understand?"

"Fully, Captain Kyd, and I thank you for the honor done me," was the reply of the young lieutenant.

"Now send the prisoner on board the cutter, and also my boxes and kegs of treasure."

"Ay, ay, sir," and soon after a stream of men were going from the hold of the Galley Slave to the hold of the Bloodhound.

"All ready, sir."

"Ay, ay; get your boats out ahead, men, and tow the cutter until she feels the breeze," cried the chief, and with a grasp of the hand of Lennox in farewell, he sprang upon the deck of the Bloodhound, which slowly moved out of the cove, and then, feeling the presence of the wind, darted away down the river; seeking the ocean through an inlet in the sandy reef, which was then open at a point just below where Seabright now stands, but which has since closed up.

"How shall I head, sir?" asked the man at the wheel when the cutter had gained an offing.

"Along the Long Island shore to Montauk, for I wish to bury the treasure I have in the hold," was the stern reply, and as soon as he saw that the fleet vessel was dashing merrily along over the rough waters, he turned to enter his cabin, at the same time calling out to the officer he left in charge of the deck:

"Manuel, send the prisoner to me, for I would have a word with him," and, as the light of the lamp fell full upon his face, it displayed a look resting there, that was more like the smile of a hyena than a human being.

CHAPTER XXI.

KYD'S FIRST STROKE OF REVENGE.

In the cabin of the cutter, fitted up with the greatest elegance from the private purse of the

Earl of Belmont, sat Kyd, the Ocean Wizard, while the vessel, that had so suddenly changed commanders, bounded over the waves on its way to Montauk Point.

The light of the cabin lamp fell full upon his dark, fascinating face, which, momentarily, as if through some bygone memory of tenderness, had lost its cruel sternness, and no one gazing upon him then, would have believed him capable of wrong-doing, and far from the terrible Kyd, whose name made mariners tremble from the Mediterranean to the Mexican Gulf.

Presently the clanking of chains was heard, and the chief started; the sadness swept from his face, and its look of stern mercilessness returned.

And then, through the gangway door, opening into the main cabin, came three men, one of whom was in irons, and between the two others.

"Seat him there, and leave. I will call you when I need you."

The guards saluted and obeyed, and the ironed prisoner turned his eyes upon his captor, and started, for there was a flash of recognition in his glance, while he muttered:

"No, no; it is but a strange resemblance, that is all; for he was killed one night in Castle Death."

And the prisoner?

He was a man of perhaps twenty-four or five, yet looked older, for his face was pale and haggard, and there rested upon it the stamp of dissipation and a free indulgence in unbridled passions.

And yet it was a face of refinement, with well chiseled features, and fine eyes, through which shone intellect above the common order.

He was attired in the uniform of a captain in the Royal navy of England, yet was ironed hand and foot, and seemed to suffer, for he sunk down in the seat placed for him by one of the guards.

"Who was it, my dear Lord Manly of Meredith, that was killed one night in Castle Death?" asked Kyd, with a sneer.

"I refer to one I knew years ago; one who was a fisher-lad, and entered the Royal navy, where he served upon the same vessel with me," was the reply.

"In what capacity did he serve?"

"He enlisted as a seaman, but rose in two weeks to a lieutenantcy, for gallant service."

"And that service he rendered: what was it?"

"He ascended to the top in a fearful gale, and saved a spar from falling and driving through the deck."

"And was that all?"

"No; but does it interest you particularly?" asked the prisoner, with renewed suspicion that his first impression had been right.

"It does, particularly; was that the only service rendered by the one you spoke of as having been foully dealt with in Castle Death?"

"No; he saved my life, when a wave boarded the vessel and was washing me off to die."

"At the risk of his own?"

"Yes, at the risk of his own life."

"Was that his only other service, Lord Manly?"

"No; in a combat with that sea scourge, known as Hurler of the Red Hand, he slew that famous pirate chief in a sword duel, and by his death, saved the cruiser to King William."

"Then your friend was a gallant fellow?"

"He was no friend of mine; his gallant deeds, and chance, won him rapid promotion; but he was an humble peasant, a fisher-lad, and I am an Irish noble," said Lord Manly, haughtily.

"Ah! it would be a crime for you to call one beneath you in rank a friend. I had forgotten your true character, Lord Manly, when I asked the question," said Kyd, with intense scorn.

"What! Do you dare insult me?" cried the noble.

"No; that were impossible; but let us not quarrel, my lord; at least not yet awhile; but tell me, do you recognize the vessel you are in?"

"Yes, it is His Majesty King William's cutter, Bloodhound, built for the Earl of Belmont, for I was on board of her, before she left London to take him, as Governor, to the New York Province."

"Your memory is good, my lord: you were captured last night, on the relief brigantine Flying Cloud, of which you were in command, I believe?"

"Yes, the brigantine, which was believed to have no equal for speed, was overhauled by that Devil of the Seas, Kyd, and taken, while I was transferred to his schooner in irons, and am now in a quandary as to whose prisoner I am."

"You are my prisoner, my Lord of Meredith Castle," was the stern rejoinder.

"And do you command this cutter?"

"I do."

"And I am right in believing that it is the Bloodhound?"

"You are."

"Then how is it I find myself in irons upon the king's cruiser, when I was captured by Kyd the Corsair?"

"I will explain, my Lord of Meredith: first I captured you when running into New York's lower harbor—"

"You?"

"Yes; then, not six hours after, I captured this cutter, the Bloodhound, at her anchorage off the town."

"You captured this vessel too?"

"Ay, so said I; and I visited the town in your brigantine, saw your former affianced bride, the Lady Kate of Castle Cor, and then, having startled the worthy Dutch burghers half out of their wits, by my presence in their fair city of Nieve Amsterdam, I carried this vessel, by boarding, and am now on the way to Ireland in her."

"In the name of the Cross! who are you?" cried Lord Manly in amazement.

"Hast ever seen him whom men call The Kyd, the Ocean Wizard?" was the quiet question.

"No: though his vessel captured me, I saw him not."

"Thou liest! I am the Kyd."

"God have mercy upon me! and you are—"

"Speak the name—him whom men once called Kenton Cavanaugh, the humble fisher-lad, and afterward the lieutenant in King William's navy."

"'Twas said he was killed by the Witch of Castle Death," said Lord Manly, speaking more to himself than to his captor.

"That was a mistake, as far as my life went, for the Witch offered me no bodily harm; but she crushed my heart, she burned my brain, she killed my soul, and made me what I am—accursed by birth, accursed by name, and the red-handed devil of the sea whom men call me."

Carried away by the remembrance of all he had lost, Kyd sprang to his feet and paced the cabin, his prisoner shrinking from the fearful look upon his face, and, as the burning eyes were turned full upon him, he cried:

Merciful Heaven! you have the face of Sir Hurltel, whose portrait hangs in Castle Cor."

"And well should I, for I am the son of Hurltel of the Red Hand."

"Hail then art thou come well by thy cruel name to inherit it from such as he was," boldly said the young noble.

But instead of anger, Kyd showed a mild manner, and said, in his softest tones:

"True, my lord, my inheritance was a curse from my father, shame from my mother, and ere we part company you will find me well worthy of my sire."

"What mean you?" asked Lord Manly, impressed by the manner of Kyd.

"I mean, Lord Manly of Meredith Castle, that I owe you a hatred I have never forgotten, for you it was that laid your riding-whip across my shoulders, from jealous rage, when I saved the life of Lady Kate of Belmont; you it was who set your hirelings upon my track to kill me, and from which I escaped by having that afternoon enlisted on board the king's cruiser, that put into the bay for you, one of her officers; but, though I escaped death, old Dermot, whom I had believed my father, fell under the blows of your assassins, and his humble cabin was burned to ashes; you it was, my noble Lord of Meredith, who, when I returned to Castle Cor with dispatches, wrote ahead of me to your hired murderers to waylay me at the Ruined Chapel and take my life; but a woman's cry saved me, and they died by my hand, for I was not caught off my guard, and to Lady Kate of Belmont and Lady Grace of Greyhurst, who were riding near, I owe it that I was not slain then, though God knows well, it were better had I been."

"Now, Lord Manly of Meredith Castle, you are my prisoner, and upon you shall my revenge fall."

"You! that humble fisher-lad, the famous Kyd," said the noble, in a dazed kind of way, not once referring to the charges Kyd had made against him.

"Yes, I am what I say, and thou art my prisoner, my lord; what hast thou to say before thy life pays the forfeit of thy crimes?"

"My crimes! what mean you, sirrah?" angrily asked Lord Manly.

"Ay, thy crimes, for didst thou not slay Dermot the fisherman, and attempt my life through hands braver than thy own?"

"And you threaten to kill me?"

"I do, and I will."

"You surely would not do so foul a wrong or commit murder so base," said the now thoroughly alarmed young noble.

"I am the Kyd, my lord of Meredith."

"Hail that answers me, for then thou wilt be guilty of any crime."

"You mistake there, my lord; but I would let my first stroke of revenge fall on you; you who, when I captured you last night, were on your way to New York, to once more sue for the hand of Kate of Belmont, and which you lost by your insult and blow to me, then a fisher-lad."

"But thy eyes, my lord, shall never fall again upon her face, for I will kill thee; ay, string thee to the yard-arm, as thou wouldst me, if I fell into thy hands."

"And thou wilt revenge thyself thus bitterly upon me?"

"Yes; and more, for I will tell thee now, Lord Manly, that I go to the Irish coast to take

the life of him whom men believe to be the heir to the Earldom of Belmont."

"What! Lord Gerald?"

"Yes: he shall die, and then I am the heir."

"You?"

"Ay, am I not the son of Hurltel of the Red Hand, the brother of the Earl of Belmont; see, here is the ring I took from his hand after I killed him."

"You are capable of any crime."

"Hail! have you a complimentary my lord: but listen, when I have taken the life of the supposed Lord Gerald, back to America I come, and then, as but three persons know the Kyd as Kenton Cavanaugh, I will claim the inheritance, and more, the hand of my cousin, Lady Kate."

"Villain!"

"Go on, Lord Manly, I never strike a doomed man: but, as I said, Lady Kate shall become my wife, and, if her father the proud Earl, objects, why a sharp steel and a ready hand will silence all objections."

"God's everlasting curse upon you, demon in human form," shouted Lord Manly, and it was evident, had he not been deterred by his irons, he would have sprung upon his tormentor and tried to kill him.

Unheeding the words of the prisoner, Kyd went on in his quiet way:

"Thou dost love, the Lady Kate of Belmont I well know, Lord Manly, and therefore I tell thee before thou diest, that she is to be mine by fair means, or foul; now, thou hast but one hour to live, for, when the sun rises over the Atlantic's horizon, thou shalt be strung up to the yard-arm of this vessel: now I leave thee to make thy peace with thy God."

Without another word the chief strode from the cabin, while the young noble sunk back on his seat and buried his face in his manacled hands.

And then before his vision trooped like grim specters, the evil deeds of his life, and he went back to the days when, a happy youth, he had won the love of Lady Kate of Castle Cor, to whom their parents had pledged him in betrothal.

But bitter memories alone remained to him, and with a savage curse he arose to his feet, and clasped his hands in despair.

Suddenly a strange light flashed in his eyes, and he looked carefully around him.

No one was present; he was alone in the cabin, and above him he heard the quick, firm tread of the pirate chief.

"By the Cross! I'll make the attempt."

"No base rope shall strangle the life out of a Lord of Meredith," he muttered.

With rapid, yet quiet motion, he began to gather up his heavy chains, until he had the weighty mass in his arms, held tightly, as though he clasped a treasure.

"He will show no mercy; he knows not the name. I will surely die at the appointed time, and as he has said, at the yard-arm."

"I will make the attempt."

"A moment of anguish, a moment of horror, and then all is over, and I am dead."

"God have mercy on my wicked soul, for man will not."

So saying he crept step by step up the companion way, and peeped above the hatch.

The gray of approaching dawn was just visible in the east—the moon was sinking in the westward behind the distant Neversink Hills, its light dimmed by skurrying clouds, while the schooner was dashing swiftly along under a ten-knot breeze.

At the wheel stood the helmsman, his eyes bent on the course, and leaning over the taffrail, gazing down into the phosphorescent wake, was an officer, while from starboard to larboard paced Kyd, wrapped in his own dark thoughts.

"So Kyd, I rob thee of half thy revenge."

The cry wrung out startingly on the night air, and a dark form with clanking sound, bounded from the companionway, and sprang over the bulwark into the sea.

There was a heavy splash, the helmsman half turned his wheel, the officer and the watch sprang to busy action, while a voice rung out in startling tones:

"Man overboard!"

"Hold on your course, helmsman! his chains will drag him to Hell," came from the stern lips of Kyd, as he coolly walked aft and gazed down upon the vessel's foaming wake, beneath which a human form was sinking into eternity's grave.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BURIAL OF THE BOOTY.

WITH a ten-knot breeze to bear her along, the Bloodhound ran down the coast of Long Island, and shortly after

"Night's dark wing

O'er the sea was thrown,"

rounded Montauk Point, then a forest-clad hill, now crowned with a lighthouse, and dropped anchor close inshore, for the wind came from seaward.

"Manuel, get the treasure kegs and boxes into two of the boats, and send a coxswain and four men in each: see that they carry spades and picks also."

"Yes, captain," answered the lieutenant, and he turned to obey the orders of his chief, who after giving them had entered the cabin, and arrayed himself for a trip to the shore.

Returning to her deck he found the boats and their crews awaiting alongside, and he asked:

"Is all ready, Manuel?"

"Yes, captain; thirteen boxes of silver in one boat, and nine kegs of jewels and gold in the other, and all are securely hooped with iron as you ordered."

"If there is any danger, though I look for none, signal me," and so saying Kyd went over the side into one of the boats and said sternly:

"Give way!"

Slowly, and with muffled oars the boats moved away, for even in that desolate place Kyd preserved the utmost caution.

Heading close inshore he steered along the wild and rocky cliff, until at last he seemed to find a spot that suited him, for he had narrowly searched the rugged coast, as the boats moved slowly along.

The bows soon grated on the sands, and the chief said sternly:

"Men, shoulder those boxes and follow me! One of you coxswains remain in the boats until the treasure is all removed, the other bring the shovels."

Silently the men took up their heavy loads and followed the tall form of their chief up the steep and rugged banks, until at last the summit was reached.

A bold point of land was here with one huge boulder of rock, and a solitary tree of gigantic proportions alone breaking its desolation.

A dreary spot, indeed, over which the sea-winds howled, the land storms swept, and clouds of sand skurried along, forming huge grave-like mounds.

"Lay down your loads and dig here," came the low order, and some of the men set to work with a will, throwing out the earth upon a sail brought along to receive it, while the others returned for the rest of the booty.

Down deep into the earth went the treasure-hiders, until at last the chief said:

"That will do: now place the treasure in its grave."

One by one the boxes of silver were lowered, until thirteen rested on the bottom; and then followed the nine kegs containing far more precious treasure, the booty of years, gathered in many seas, and costing the shedding of enough human blood to hide them from sight.

Then into the grave—for it was nothing more—was shoveled the loose earth, and packed hard down, until it was level with the surrounding ground, and over this the winds rapidly drifted sand that effectually hid the spot, while the damp dirt, left in the piece of sail, was carried back to the shore and thrown into the sea.

"Even old Zebel the Sorceress cannot find the burial-place of that treasure, with all her evil powers and incantation," said Kyd, grimly, as he sprang into the stern sheets of the boat that had brought him ashore, and told the two crews to shove off.

In a short while more they reached the cutter, the boats were swung at the davits, and the anchor quickly left the bottom.

"Which way now, Captain Kyd?" asked the lieutenant, Manuel, as the sails were let fall and the cutter gained headway.

"To the Irish coast."

The officer betrayed no surprise, though he certainly felt amazement at having the ocean to cross; but he asked, as the Bloodhound rounded Montauk, and held on for the open sea:

"I hope you found a safe hiding-place for the treasure, sir?"

"Yes, Manuel; no one will ever find it, should aught befall me."

"But the ten men you took with you, sir?"

"Oh, they will keep the secret, I am certain," said Kyd, significantly; and he descended to the cabin to seek the rest he so much needed, and throwing himself in his berth, he soon slept as calmly as though his hands and his heart were not stained with crime that was infaceable.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DEATH DUNGEON.

THERE was no grander old home in all Ireland than Castle Cor, the abiding-place of the Earl of Belmont, and which had come down from father to son for many generations.

Commanding the left entrance to a picturesque bay on the southern coast of Ireland, Castle Cor loomed grandly up, and its towers and its terraces commanded views of the sea and shores for leagues, and of hills and dales inland for many a mile.

And it is to this home of wealth, luxury and nobility that I would carry the reader, three weeks after the night of the treasure-burying on Montauk Point by the pirate Kyd.

Upon one of the broad sea-terraces, and near the sunset hour, reclined a young man intently gazing seaward at an approaching sail, while beneath the hammock, which he used as a couch, were squatted several dogs of rare breed, also apparently interested in the coming vessel.

"Sligo!"

In answer to his name, that lazily issued from

the lips of the young man, an attendant appeared in huntsman's dress, coming from a wing of the castle.

"Bring me my sea glass; yonder vessel has the appearance of the cruiser in which the earl sailed for that nasty land of America."

The man, half-servant, half-companion, for he was the hunter of the castle, disappeared on his errand, and Lord Gerald, the petted, dissipated, arrogant heir to the Earldom of Belmont, continued to closely watch the coming vessel.

Receiving the glass from the hands of Sligo he leveled it at the sail, and soon said:

"By the Cross! it is the Bloodhound; the earl, as I predicted and feared, has tired of his new province, and has returned; he catches us in bad plight, Sligo, for the last orgies have turned the castle upside down; but then, I do not care, for he should have given a bachelor warning of his coming."

Nearer and nearer drew the vessel, until just at sunset she glided through the bold headlands, one crowned by Castle Cor, and the other by Castle Death, and dropped anchor near the Belmont shore.

"I recognize no familiar form, Sligo, on her decks; she is doubtless sent over with dispatches to the king, and had orders to pay Castle Cor a visit to see how I get on."

"She will find you well, sir," said Sligo, with sycophantic lie, for he knew well that Lord Gerald's orgies the past few weeks had left him in a deplorable plight, for the castle had rung with the song and dance of mad revels, and the clink of glasses was mingled with the roar of the surf, as the dissolute heir, freed from the restraint of his father and family, believed in a short life and a merry one.

Until darkness fell upon the sea did Lord Gerald keep his eye upon the cruiser, and then he went into his wing of the castle, indifferently remarking that if the commander of the vessel had business with him he knew where to find him.

And yet his curiosity was excited to a certain extent, for the cruiser might have returned with the body of the earl, who in some way had met his death in the wild land of America, and in that case, he was Earl of Belmont.

At length a servant entered with the information that the commander of the cruiser Bloodhound desired an audience.

"Show him in here," was the indolent reply, and a moment after an officer in the uniform of the Royal Navy entered.

Lord Gerald glanced up and saw a man of fine presence, tall and commanding, and a dark, handsome face that struck him as being strangely familiar, and he rose with an effort and said bluntly:

"Good-evening; I am told you desired to see me."

"I command the cruiser, my lord, that you saw enter the harbor at sunset, and I am just from New York in America, where I only three weeks ago saw your family, for I have made a rapid run over."

"Ah! it is a good passage; but have you no dispatches for me?"

"I have orders for you, my lord, and they are verbal only."

"Orders! who is it that sends Lord Gerald of Castle Cor, orders?" haughtily asked the young noble.

"I will tell you, my lord; it is one who on an occasion you may well remember, saved your life and your vessel, in a combat beneath the very shadow of this castle."

"Ah! do you refer to my combat with the noted Kyd?"

"Yes; he spared you then, he has come for you now."

The nobleman was now on his feet, for he was thoroughly alarmed, as at heart he was a coward.

"In Heaven's name what mean you?" he asked.

"I mean, Gerald Cameron that you have no right to the title of Lord Gerald, for your father was Donald Cameron, the secretary of the Earl of Belmont, and your mother was Agnes Cameron."

The young man sunk back in his chair, his lips quivering, his face pallid, as he said:

"It is a lie; I am Lord Gerald of Castle Cor."

"And I repeat that you are not; the Earl of Belmont never had a son, and I, as the son of Sir Hurltel, of Castle Crag, better known as Hurltel of the Red Hand, am the heir."

"In God's name! who are you?" gasped the man in a tremor he could not control.

"I am he who was once known as Kenton Cavanaugh, but whom men now call Kyd, the Ocean Wizard."

"Hol without there! Sligo! Dennis! Rowell!" yelled the startled noble, unable from fear to move from his chair.

"Your servants cannot come, Gerald Cameron, as they are under the guard of my men."

"Then I am lost," groaned the unhappy man.

"You are; I came across the ocean for you, Gerald Cameron, and if you know Kyd by name, you may as well understand that you have but a short time to live."

"Oh, Merciful Heaven, spare me! I will yield

you your accursed title, pirate, if you will spare my life," he cried, earnestly.

"It is better to have you out of the way; come!"

But the dissolute young man had not the strength to rise from his seat, and stepping to the door, the chief gave a signal, and four men quickly entered.

"Bear that man to the Bloodhound, and put him in irons."

They lifted the unresisting young man in their arms, and passed from the room, and out of the castle gate down the steep path leading to the beach below.

Like one in a dream then Kyd walked through the castle, ascended to the upper stories, and soon stood in the deserted suit of rooms where dwelt Lady Kate.

"And here she lived; alas! what memories flood my soul as I stand here!"

"And yonder, on that beach far below, I passed my boyhood days, her window my sunlight by day, the lamp that glimmered from it my moon by night; and, how often on stormy nights, when all was dark and drear around me, has this window been the beacon to guide me home over the wild waters."

As if overcome by his emotions, he turned abruptly from the rooms, and descended to the court, where he found the castle servants under a guard from the vessel.

"Manuel, keep them guarded until I return to this shore," he said, and turned away; but suddenly paused, as he beheld one of those sudden storms coming up, which, almost with the rapidity of West Indian cyclones sweep down upon the southern coast of Ireland.

"No, release them, and come with me," and turning to the servants, he continued:

"My lads, your master has been guilty of a crime, which causes me to bear him away in yonder cruiser; let things go on here as usual, and report as soon as possible to the earl's agent, that Castle Cor is without a head."

"I'll do so, captain, and I was afraid, sir, from the way the young lord was going it by day and night, that trouble would come," answered Sligo, who, with the others, had no idea that the Bloodhound was not under the British ensign.

Down the steep path went Kyd and his men, and, as they reached the vessel's side, the storm broke upon them.

"Up with that anchor! close reef her storm sails! I will take the helm," were Kyd's stern orders, and soon the cutter darted away across the bay, not a light visible upon her decks, and still believed to be at her anchorage, by the servants at Castle Cor.

"Manuel, in the old castle, which you saw upon the left headland as we entered the bay, Hurltel of the Red Hand was wont to bury his treasures, and to-night I intend to pay it a visit," said Kyd, as he held across the bay, and his lieutenant stood by his side, wondering how it was the chief dare run in such a blow and almost total darkness.

"The place looked like a ruin, sir."

"It is: once it was known as Castle Crag, then as Hurltel's Roost, and now they call it Castle Death, and say 'tis haunted; but I shall land at its water stairs, and I wish the two coxswains and eight men who went with me to bury the treasure on Montauk, to accompany me now, for I have need of them, and also I would have the company of the prisoner."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Manuel, and as the dark outline suddenly loomed up dead ahead, he called away a boat and the ten seamen, while the prisoner was brought out on deck.

Shortening sail, and in fact, stripping the cruiser of canvas, the Kyd guided her onward, until within a cable's length of the ruin, and then the anchor was let fall, the boat lowered, and the picked crew entered it.

Following them came the prisoner, whose irons had been removed and the chief gave the order to head for the water stairs, and soon they stood upon the crumbling landing.

"Await me here!" said their leader shortly, and he entered the arch of the sea tower and disappeared.

A moment after he drew from beneath his cloak a lantern, and by its light followed the vaulted corridors, until he stood beneath the very center of the castle.

Here he paused, and muttered aloud: "The paper I took from the body of—of—ah! I might as well say it—my father, Hurltel of the Red Hand, read:

"Find the center vault beneath the castle, and stand with your back to the middle stone pillar, and on its northern side: then measure ten feet due north, ten feet due east, fifteen feet due north, at proper angles, and halt; where you then stand, place the weight of two hundred pounds, and it will sink down thirty inches, and slide one side beneath the flooring, revealing the vault and a ladder to descend; to close the vault, step on the second slab to the west from the movable one, and with the same weight."

"Oh I know it by heart, for I expected it would serve me some day," grimly said the chief, and he followed to the latter the directions he had half-spoken aloud, and which he had taken from a note-book found on the body of Hurltel of the Red Hand.

As he halted upon the required spot, the slab began to sink beneath his weight, and springing back upon the stone floor he saw it, after descending some thirty inches, glide out of sight.

Holding his lantern he beheld a narrow shelf about three feet down, and resting against it a ladder.

This he quickly descended, and found himself in a vault, which he knew was far down beneath the Castle's foundations.

It was some thirty feet deep, and about as many square, and upon the flooring were about a score of stout, iron-bound boxes, the weight of which proved that they contained treasure.

Having made this discovery he retraced his way back to the sea tower and ordered his waiting crew and Lord Gerald to follow him.

Their eyes opened with amazement, when they saw the vault, and were told to descend into it, and return with the treasure to be found there.

Silently they obeyed, and the chief accompanied by his silent prisoner lighted them to the boat, in which the boxes were placed.

"Return now for the balance," was the order, and willingly the men obeyed, descending once more unhesitatingly into the loathsome vault.

"Now, my Lord Gerald, do you descend and see that they leave no looty."

Mechanically the young man obeyed, and when he had taken his foot from the ladder, Kyd suddenly leapt over and seized it, drawing it quickly up, while he said in mocking tones:

"Lads, that is a good hole in which to hide the secret of the Montauk treasure; there is a box apiece for you of old Hurltel's booty, and one of these days I will return to see what use you have made of it; and you, pretended heir to Belmont, I bid a last and long farewell."

A wail of anguish came up from the doomed men, and rolled in sepulchral echo along the vaulted corridors; but unheeding their cries for mercy, the iron-hearted man sprung upon the second slab of stone from the aperture, and instantly the massive covering arose to its place, shutting off the shrieks and groans of the wretched victims.

Seeing that the slab was securely in its place, Kyd took up his lantern and returned to his boat, which he sprung into, and seizing the oars, rowed back to the cutter himself.

"Into this boat, men, and get this treasure down into the hold! now, Manuel, let the anchor come up, and we'll drop the Castle's turrets by sunrise," he said in his deep tones.

"But the men, Captain Kyd?"

"What men, sir?"

"Those who accompanied you ashore, sir."

"Ah, yes! well, they were content with a box of booty apiece, and will not return to the vessel, and the prisoner is with them," was the significant reply, as Kyd again took the wheel; as there was something in his manner that prevented further questioning, the pirate crew had to rest content with the belief that their ten comrades had turned traitors, released the captive and run off with half the booty, little dreaming that they were in a dungeon of death, from which they could never come alive.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE KNIGHT OF THE BLACK PLUME.

IT WAS a dark, stormy night, just six weeks to the day, after the capture of the Bloodhound by Kyd, and nothing having been heard from that famous rover, since his last daring deed under the guns of the Rondeel, even the Earl of Belmont and Clement St. Vane began to feel that the cutter had foundered in the gale with her outlaw commander and all on board, though the young captain hoped that the Ocean Wizard yet lived to one day meet him in combat.

Believing that all danger had passed, even the officers of the forts and the two guard boats were lax in their discipline, and allowed the sentinels to seek shelter from the storm, and the watch to cruch down in the fore-castle, and Captain St. Vane, as was his wont, being at the Governor's mansion, the officer of the brigantine had sought the comfort of the cabin, until about time for his commander to return, and the men quickly took advantage of this dereliction of duty on the part of their superior.

Whether the commander of a vessel that was standing up New York harbor, under only mizzen sail and jib, both reefed down, had calculated upon this laxity of discipline among the seamen and soldiers of New York, is not certain; but true it is, that he crept toward the town in a manner that seemed to bode evil, for not a light was visible upon the mysterious craft, no order was issued in a loud voice, and he seemed skulking rather than sailing up to an anchorage.

Back of Governor's Island the strange vessel came to anchor, and even had any eye on the brigantine and in the Rondeel been searching for a coming foe, they could not have seen her there.

But little dreaming of danger the town was given up to gayety, for a grand ball was in progress at the White Hall, the Governor of the Province having given an entertainment to his staff, and invited all the prominent citizens of Nieuwe Amsterdam, as the elder inhabitants

still insisted upon calling their town, of which they were so proud.

To make the affair more enjoyable, the young gallants had requested that it be a masquerade ball, a suggestion which one and all of the younger people hailed with delight, and at an early hour of the evening, notwithstanding the storm, the clumsy vehicles of the time began to roll up the gravel walk leading to the White Hall and deposit their fair freight upon the stone *stoops* of the old mansion, where they were welcomed by an *aide-de-camp* and ushered into a retiring room, from whence they emerged, the ladies robed exquisitely in different costumes, and the gentlemen as knights, courtiers, and in fancy attire, but one and all *en masque*.

When the strains of music floated away on the driving storm, and the patter of dancing feet was at its height, a man approached the mansion on foot, and so closely enveloped in a long cloak and drooping hat, that nothing of his face and form could be seen.

As he stepped up to a window and peered within, he started suddenly as he felt a light touch upon his arm, and in an instant held in an iron like grasp, the one who had so cautiously approached him; but he released his hold in a moment, saying in a deep voice:

"Ha! Sorceress, it is you; but you should beware how you approach a man in these troublous times."

"Yes, it is Zebel the Sorceress of Hell Gate, and you are—"

"Who?" he asked as she paused.

"One who has just crossed the seas, and dropped anchor in a port where a price is set upon his head."

"Ah! you know me then?"

"Yes."

"In Satan's name, how did you recognize me, hag?"

"Had not thy splendid form betrayed thee, then would thy steel grip upon my arm and throat have done so."

"I must be more careful," he said, thoughtfully.

"You love danger too well to be cautious; but thou didst succeed across the sea?"

"Yes."

"And him whom men called Lord Gerald?"

"Lies dead in the deep dungeon of Castle Death."

"And Lord Manly of Meredith?"

"Why do you ask, woman?"

"Gave I not thee fair winds, and good luck? Did I not know why thou didst sail? Then wherefore not tell me of thy success?"

"Thy infernal arts should find it out, and doubtless will, so I will tell thee, though there is one thing that thine eyes never beheld."

"What is that?"

"The secret dungeon in Death Castle."

"Ha! ha! ha! Death Castle was to me as my open hand; but how didst thou find that hidden treasure, beneath the slab that it took two hundred pounds to roll away?"

"In faith, thou dost know; thou art a wonderful woman, Zebel, and I will tell thee that Lord Manly lies at the bottom of the sea, where he sunk to prevent a rope lacerating his noble neck."

"Well, what wilt thou do now?"

"First, I will enter this mansion."

"Thou wilt be recognized."

"I am no fool; I was here an hour ago, and finding that it was a masquerade ball, I returned, and will now appear in full costume and *en masque*."

"Thou art a bold man, Kyd."

"Thank you, Zebel."

"But they unmask at twelve, and it is now within two hours of that time."

"I shall retire then."

"What to do?"

"Circumstances shall determine, woman."

"Then remember thy oath to one day be Earl of Belmont."

"Yes; but if I cannot win Kate of Belmont and my title by fair means, then it will be time to try foul."

"I would rather thou wouldst begin with evil."

"I know it, thou devilish hag; but you set no time to the fulfillment of my oath, and I shall take my own time to accomplish my purpose: hast seen Kate of Belmont of late?"

"Yes; it is but a short while since she and Lady Grace were at my den."

"In St. Patrick's name what went they to that Satan's den for?"

"To see Sathaness," was the prompt rejoinder.

"Ah! and they saw you?"

"Yes."

"Their business, woman?"

"To learn if you had gone down in the gale that struck you, the night of your daring capture of the king's cruiser."

"And you told them—"

"I read the Heavens, and I saw that you were returning to these shores, and I told them so."

"And she asked for me?"

"Yes; she feared you were dead, and she dreaded you living."

"An uneasy state to be in; but now I must leave thee to thy diabolical machinations, and

go into the mansion, yet I will see you before many days."

Without another word the chief ascended the stoop, dropped the visor of a helmet he wore, and boldly raised the brass knocker.

The door was opened by Derric, and the young *aide* being called, showed, what he took to be a distinguished guest, to the ante-room, a moment after ushered the tall form of Kyd, clad in a full suit of steel armor, ornamented with solid gold, into the large dancing hall, introducing him in the name given by the disguised corsair, as:

"The Knight of the Black Plume."

CHAPTER XXV.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

THE entrance of the Knight of the Black Plume created a decided impression, for not one present was attired as he was, his steel armor and silver helmet being worth a fortune.

But, as if wholly unconscious of the excitement occasioned by his majestic appearance, he sought the Earl of Belmont at once, and who was not masked, and with courtly grace inquired after his health and that of the countess.

Unable to penetrate the gold visor of his helmet, the earl led his supposed distinguished guest once through the parlors and halls, and presented him to a maiden attired in Greek costume, and wearing a silver thread mask, through which her eyes shone with brilliancy.

"I trust I find the Lady Grace of Greyhurst well," said Kyd, in his low, soft tones.

"Why how is it you recognize me?" asked the maiden in surprise.

"It were hard for you to hide your fair face and form so as to prevent recognition, Lady Grace, even though you disguised yourself as a sailor lad."

The maiden started, and her hand convulsively fell upon the arm of her mysterious companion, while she said in a low tone:

"Oh God! that you should have come here; but come, for there are eyes upon us."

She led the way through the gay crowd, the sable plume of the disguised pirate waving far above the heads of all, and conducted him into an ante-room off the upper hall.

There were no others present, and Lady Grace turned and said in a quick, nervous way:

"Oh! that you should be what you are, and come here this night, when a high price rests on your head; but you must away at once."

"You know me then, Lady Grace?" he asked sadly.

"Alas! I know you as Kyd, the fearful Ocean Wizard; would to God I knew you as once you were instead, the fisher-lad of Castle Cor."

"That day has passed, lady; the dream of my life was rudely, oh, so rudely broken, and hope, ambition, honor, all lie shattered at my feet."

"You have no excuse for being what you are, for your very deeds of crime have proven how noble a name you could have won."

"No, lady, there was no place on honor's tablet for me, alas; I am lower than the lowest, and unworthy a kind thought from you; but I came not here to harm you, or those you love; why I came the morrow will reveal, and now that I am here I would see the Lady Kate."

"Not not not!"

"But for one moment."

"I say no: you left her in a swoon at your last visit, for I know all, though she betrayed you to no one, and I recognized you as I passed on horseback in the Bowline Green."

"As I recognized you, Lady Grace, by this little kerchief, may I keep it?" and he drew from his gauntlet the handkerchief which Lady Grace had dropped in her visit to the brigantine, when disguised as a sailor lad.

"I was bold that night; but knowing you as Lady Kate and myself did, remembering you as one from Castle Cor, I cared not to see you die, so went to warn you that you were known."

"And I thank you; but Lady Kate cared not whether I was captured or not," he said with a slight tone of scorn.

"You wrong her: but she was too weak after her fainting attack and meeting you; yet why should either Lady Kate or myself feel one atom of sympathy for you, Kenton Cavanaugh?"

"Breathe not that name, lady; it was mine in honor; now I am only *The Kyd*; but I will detain thee no longer."

"And you will not attempt to see Lady Kate?"

"I will attempt it, Lady Grace, ay, I will see and speak with her," he said firmly.

The maiden seemed not to know what to do or say; but after a moment's pause she said in a determined way:

"If you speak to her she will recognize your voice and betray you."

"I will risk it."

"If you persist, Sir Kyd, I will betray you."

"So be it, lady: before I am taken there will be many bewail my coming, and if I die on the gallows, it will be your fair hands that lead me there."

"No, no, no, I cannot betray you: stay, remain here, and I will bring the Lady Kate."

She disappeared from the room, and a moment after a slender, graceful form, attired in the sable robes of a nun, and wearing a half mask of black *crape*, entered the room.

"Lady Kate, it was kind of you," and Kyd withdrew his gauntlet and grasped her hand.

"Sir, my cousin, Lady Grace, informed me that some one desired to see me in this room; are you that person?" and Lady Kate of Belmont drew herself proudly up, withdrawing her hand from the grasp of the buccaneer.

"Lady Kate of Belmont, you see before you one who was presented as the Knight of the Sable Plume: but look and see whose face this visor hides, and know, that in coming here to see you, I place my life in your hands."

He spoke in his deep, earnest way, and ere he raised the gold visor of his helmet Lady Kate sunk down upon a divan, well knowing whose face would be revealed; and she said in a voice hardly audible:

"Kenton Cavanaugh, you will yet make me thy murderess."

"May I ask your meaning, Lady Kate of Belmont?" he said, coldly.

"Twice you have placed yourself in my power; beware of the third time."

"I heed no warning, fair lady."

"I have but to utter a cry and there will come to my aid those who would cut you down where you stand."

"It would be dear work for them, my lady," he said, threateningly, and she answered:

"Oh, why is it I do not summon Captain St. Vane and have him seize you?"

"If you desire so to do, Lady Kate of Belmont, I am content; give the cry for aid, and then, when the servitor of thy girlhood, and anon thy friend, but now The Kyd, mounts the gallows, do thou, with thy own fair hands, place the death noose of the hangman around his neck, and the whole world will bless thee."

"Forbear! for the love of the Virgin Mother torture me not thus," cried the poor maiden.

"Wilt answer me one question, fair lady?" he suddenly asked.

"What would you know?"

"Rumor has it that Captain St. Vane is thy lover, instead of, as was believed at first, the suitor of thy cousin, Lady Grace; does rumor speak true?"

"You have no right to ask, nor will I reply," she said, haughtily.

"So be it, fair lady; I came hither to ask the question of you, and I have the truth in your refusal to answer, and I warn you that I will have the life of thy gallant captain, and then will I come to offer thee the hand of Kyd in honor."

She shrunk from him, but he said, quickly:

"I will leave you now; but let me return thee to thy father's, or mayhap thy lover's, arm."

As he spoke he drew her hand upon his steel-clad arm, and led her from the room, she striving hard to control the emotion that almost overwhelmed her.

In the grand hall they found many of the guests unmasking, and, beholding Clement St. Vane in full uniform, Kyd led the unresisting, trembling maiden toward him, remarking pleasantly:

"Ah! Captain St. Vane, may I leave the Lady Kate of Belmont on your arm, for none more gallant could I find?"

"I thank you, Sir Knight of the Sable Plume for the honor and the compliment; but may I not see the face of the one who is so generous?" answered the captain, lightly.

"I prefer not to raise my visor just yet, my dear captain; but rest assured that we have met before and shall again. Lady Kate, until that third meeting, I bid you adieu."

He bowed gracefully, and wended his way slowly through the hall, attracting universal attention from all.

At the outer door he found Lady Grace, unmasked, pale and nervous, and seizing his hand, she said earnestly:

"Thank Heaven you have not been discovered; farewell, and may God guard you back to honor's path."

He made no reply, but pressed her hand, and stepped out of the grand door and disappeared in the darkness, while the guests now all assembled around the generous supper board and wondered who could have been the strange and majestic knight who had so mysteriously departed from their midst.

But they remained not long in doubt, for a weird form suddenly entered the supper hall, and said in a loud, harsh voice:

"Earl of Belmont, wouldst know who wast the Knight of the Sable Plume?"

A score of startled cries arose from the ladies, and even the men shrunk back, as they beheld Zebel the Sorceress of Hell Gate.

But the earl advanced, and said in a kindly tone:

"Good Zebel, woman, thou must not alarm my guests."

"Ha! ha! ha! do they tremble at sight of an old woman, when he who has just left their midst was none other than Kyd, of the Black Plume?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHAT THE DAYLIGHT REVEALED.

FOR pen to depict the scene that followed the startling announcement of Zebel the Sorceress, were impossible, for fair women fainted, others shrieked, strong men trembled, and but few retained their presence of mind, and those were Lady Kate and Lady Grace, the Earl of Belmont, Captain St. Vane and a few more of the officers.

"Woman, do you speak the truth?" asked the earl, in stern tones, when the excitement abated sufficiently to allow him to speak to the Sorceress, who remained calmly gazing upon the scene her words had caused.

"Ay, do I speak the truth, Earl of Belmont: he who was steel-clad like a knight of old, and wore in his helmet the sable plume, was none other than Captain Kyd."

"How know you this, woman?" queried Captain St. Vane.

"I have seen him often, and in the streets of your town. I saw him raise his helmet ere he came to this mansion to-night, and there is but one face like his in all the world."

"Then why told you not me, that I might capture him?" said the earl angrily.

"I came hither to do so, but I was too late, my lord," was the ready reply of the Sorceress, who cared not to draw the Governor's ill-will upon her by the thought that she favored the corsair.

"I am sorry you were not sooner, or that you did not tell some of the officers or soldiers at the Rondeel."

"Thy officers take their ease on stormy nights, Earl of Belmont, and thy cowardly Dutch soldiers drink scheitum, gulp ale and cloud their brains with tobacco until they are as stupid as fatted hogs; even now a host of them sit at Jost Stall's frightening themselves with their own talk, and discussing the right of the English to change the name of Nieuwe Amsterdam to New York; but why stand those gallant gentry there idle now, when there is danger in the air?"

Clement St. Vane had already hastily disappeared, and the other officers took the hint and departed for their respective commands, or reported to the earl for duty, while the ladies huddled together in the grand hall to await coming events.

Without, the storm raged even more furiously than before, the waves fell with heavy wash upon the shore, the vessels at the docks strained and creaked uneasily, and the howling winds caused the swinging street lamps to cast dancing shadows against the walls.

Out upon the river the brigantine and two guard-boats tugged impatiently at their cables, as if to fly from impending danger, and the shivering crews, who had been warned by Clement St. Vane, stood at their guns in readiness to fight to the bitter end.

Having hastened on board his vessel, and ordered the men silently to quarters, the young captain had sent boats with muffled oars to warn the guard-boats, while he had dispatched messengers to the Rondeel and other forts, where soldiers, suffering from the cold blasts and fear combined, heartily wished the Ocean Wizard in the bottomless pit.

And thus the night passed away; all on the *qui vive*, eyes strained to catch sight of an enemy approaching upon the waters, aides riding from fort to Rondeel, Rondeel to fort, and thence to the Governor's mansion, where yet remained the frightened lady-guests, longing for the merest atom of news, for suspense was worse than reality.

At last the black clouds grew gray, and, as the dawn increased, all eyes were bent down the harbor, and from a thousand lips went up a cry of alarm.

But not down the harbor did an object catch the eyes of all, but close in shore, anchored off the Governor's mansion, having, in the darkness and storm, run the gantlet of brigantine, guard-boats and the Rondeel, was the captured cutter, the *Bloodhound*!

But the keen eye of Clement St. Vane had first discovered her, his trumpet voice rung out, ordering the cable slipped, and like an eagle at its quarry the brigantine dashed toward its prey.

"Boarders ahoy! Away from those guns! boarders here!" shouted the young commander, and all at the mansion heard his clarion voice, and awaited to see the dread conflict.

"Starboard your helm! steady! lay her aboard! throw grapnels! follow me, boarders!"

The orders thrilled every heart, the two vessels came together with a slight shock, the grapnels were thrown, and a hundred seamen followed their young commander upon the cutter's decks.

But not a shot was fired, not a cutlass met cutlass; not a man was visible to offer resistance, and the capture was a bloodless victory, for it was a crewless craft.

The Kyd had kept his word; he had returned the *Bloodhound* in perfect order, armed and equipped, and in a mysterious way that gave him a still greater name, and right to the title of the Ocean Wizard, while at her peak was

flying, instead of the British ensign, a large red flag, in the center of which was a black plume.

CHAPTER XXVII.

STRANGE SOUVENIRS.

WHEN Clement St. Vane bore down upon the cutter, although, in the dim light of early morning, he saw no men upon her decks, he certainly expected a warm reception and a desperate battle to follow; at last he believed that the pirate chief was on equal terms with him, and he determined to fight unto the bitter end.

And there was every incentive to make a brave seaman fight, for the eyes of the Governor, the eyes of beautiful women and of citizens were upon him; while he was to meet the famous Ocean Wizard, and also punish him for his audacity in coming right under the guns of two forts and within range of three vessels of war to offer battle.

Fearful of throwing shot into the Governor's mansion, or the town, the young captain had determined to carry his foe by boarding, instead of using his guns; but he was all taken aback to spring upon an empty deck, as far as human enemies were concerned, for not a pirate was visible.

The guns were in perfect order, the deck clean as a Dutch housewife's dining-room, every rope neatly coiled, not a stay or a sail out of order, and below decks all was shipshape.

What could it mean?

That was the query from all sides, and also asked by the earl, who quickly rowed out to the vessel.

At first it was feared that The Kyd had invented some hellish design for blowing up his foes, and the cry arose that a slow match was burning steadily toward the magazine.

But fearlessly Clement St. Vane went below, followed by the earl, and no such diabolical contrivance was found: but instead, upon the cabin table lay a letter addressed to

"CAPTAIN CLEMENT ST. VANE,
ROYAL NAVY."

Breaking the seal the young captain read aloud to the earl, who stood by his side:

"Some two months ago I borrowed, from the officer left in charge, this cutter of King William's: but having served my purpose with the very beautiful and stanch craft, I now return her to the keeping of Captain Clement St. Vane in perfect order and equipment, with the hope that I may one day have the honor of measuring the strength of the *Bloodhound*, under his command, with the *Galley Slave*.
"KYD, THE DEVIL OF THE SEA."

The earl looked at the captain and the captain looked at the earl, and for some moments neither of them spoke from sheer amazement.

"Well, St. Vane, that man is, I verily believe, a wizard, as truly as Zebel the Sorceress is a witch."

"It would seem so, my lord; he certainly means you no harm, nor New York, for he takes no underhanded advantage, as he has assuredly proven; but he seems most anxious to meet me, and try conclusions, and by the Cross! he shall."

"Not until after the date has passed that he warned us of danger, St. Vane; unless, of course, he runs up here in the harbor; you will, of course, take the *Bloodhound* again?"

"Yes, my lord; she carries three more guns than the brigantine, and two more than the *Galley Slave*; besides, I can on her keep about a hundred and twenty to thirty men, and the pirate always has his hundred, which I confess I would hate to meet on equal terms under such a leader, for they have fought many a bloody combat, and he knows not what it is to be beaten."

"Then pick your men for the cruiser, and I will man the brigantine from the seamen in port; thank Heaven, we have two splendid vessels now, and two that will not prove indifferent foes in action by any means, and your little fleet shall be increased by one more; I refer to the Boston yacht that came into the harbor several days ago, and whose skipper wanted me to man and arm her."

"I am honored, my lord, by the command of the little fleet; but I really think that we will find them necessary, now that New York is becoming such a mercantile port. But see, what is this?" and Captain St. Vane took down from over the transom a superb sword, the hilt of gold, studded with precious stones, and the scabbard of silver.

"It is something the chief has left; I suppose, in honor bound, we should return it to him," said the earl, with a light laugh.

"No, my lord, it is mine, for read this," and Clement St. Vane handed to the earl a card, upon which was written:

"TO CAPTAIN CLEMENT ST. VANE,
Royal Navy, and Commanding Sea Forces, Province of New York. As a souvenir from
"KYD OF THE BLACK PLUME."

"Well, he is generous, and I accept his magnificent gift."

"But here on the other side is something else written—ah!" and the earl read aloud:

"The sword, Kyd hopes to cross with his own blade in deadly combat."

"The rope, Kyd presents for Captain St. Vane to make use of when he has hauled down the black flag of the Ocean Wizard."

"By the Lord Harry! he shall be obliged as he desires, brave and gallant as he is," said Clement St. Vane, with a smile.

"He is more of a mystery than ever. See, here hangs the rope, with noose and all ready, and it is a stout one; it is a wonder he did not furnish the gallows and his own coffin, too. But come, St. Vane, we will go over to the mansion for breakfast, and relieve the minds of my numerous guests, whose night of enjoyment was so rudely broken into," and, having given orders to his lieutenant to transfer the crew of the brigantine to the *Bloodhound*, and enlist more seamen for the *Flying Cloud* and guard-boats, Clement St. Vane accompanied the Governor to the White Hall, where the strange story of what Kyd had done was told to the attentive listeners, and the Ocean Wizard became more than ever an awe-inspiring being, whose commission must certainly be given countersigned by Satan, the Prince of Darkness and Evil.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE COUNTESS'S ADVENTURE.

THOUGH their residence in New York was a total change from their life in Ireland, it cannot be denied that not only the earl, but also the countess and Lady Kate and Lady Grace, soon became greatly attached to their new home.

The grand old hall, the beautiful grounds, the superb scenery of river, bay, distant ocean, hills and highlands, with the warm-hearted nature of the New Yorkers, quite won the hearts of the noble family, while the excitement of a new country had a fascination for them.

Had the Countess Lenore remained at Castle Cor, she would have bitterly mourned that the lover of her girlhood, in truth the only man she had ever loved, had met with death upon a pirate vessel; and that she had, in severing her engagement with him to marry his titled and wealthy brother, in a great measure contributed to his evil life, she could not deny to her own heart, for, from the day she had turned her back upon him and placed her hand in the Earl of Belmont's keeping, Hurltel of Castle Crag had been a changed man, became a hermit in his own home, and had drifted away from all past associations of honor, to link himself with Gipsies and pirates.

One day, a short while after the return of the cutter so mysteriously by Kyd, the countess was strolling in the gardens that ran to the water's edge.

It was a balmy afternoon, and book in hand she had seated herself in a rustic arbor to read; but there was an influence in the air and scene, that caused her to neglect her book, and devote herself to reveries of the past.

And the still beautiful face became tinged with sadness as she remembered him whom she had loved and cast aside for riches and title—ay, still loved, though he had

"Left a corsair's name to other times,
Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes."

So deeply did she dream of the past, and day-dreaming only did she indulge in, for she had made a true and noble wife, burying her love forever in her heart, that she failed to notice a boat touch the bank and a tall form spring out.

Apparently seeking to avoid observation the boatman walked quickly toward the arbor, but started back as his eyes fell upon the countess, while she, with a half cry, arose.

"Pardon, Lady Countess of Belmont this intrusion; I was on my way to seek your noble husband the earl," said the boatman, in low, courteous tones.

"The earl is in his library, sir, in the mansion; but have we not met before?" she asked, a puzzled look upon her lovely face.

"Yes, lady, for I need not deny it; we met at Castle Cor."

"Ah! I recall now your face; but no, 'twas said that the one you so resembled was killed at Castle Death—"

"No, lady, I am he who was once Kerton Cavanaugh," said Kyd, for he it was, imperiously.

"Then I welcome you, and the earl will be delighted to meet you again."

"I regret to think to the contrary, fair Lady of Belmont; when you knew me, I was a man of honor; but now I am—"

He paused, and she gazed upon him with a strange look, while she asked:

"What mean your words, sir?"

"I mean, Countess of Belmont, that to you I owe it that I am what I am—a base-born outcast and outlaw."

"Ha! this to me, sir? I am not accustomed to such—"

"But you must hear me, for you it was who turned the heart of Hurltel of Castle Crag to iron, and poured gall into his life."

"Ha! his name! how dare you recall him to me?" and the countess sunk back upon the oak seat, from which she had arisen at his entrance.

"A son has a right to recall his father's name, Countess of Belmont."

"A son! in Heaven's name what mean you?"

"Hast ever heard that Hurltel of Castle Crag was married?"

As if speaking to herself, the countess answered:

"I remember now: the fair form seen in the old castle; but 'twas said she was not his wife."

"That is susceptible of proof, Countess of Belmont: in me you behold the son of your old lover, and my mother was one whom you knew as Gipsy Jule."

"Hail now I recall all: 'twas whispered that she saved his life, and afterward she mysteriously disappeared, and her people were Gipsy pirates—"

"You are right, Lady Countess; your memory serves you well; but had you kept faith with my father, he would not have taken Gipsy Jule to his castle, and you not she would have been my mother; ay, and more, Hurltel would never have had the annex of Red Hand to his name, while I, with such a father, could not follow in his footsteps and become what now I am—Kyd of the Black Plume."

"Oh God!"

The poor woman made no effort to fly, even though his words told her who he was; but in bitterness of spirit she gazed upon him and moaned, while, after another glance into his face she said:

"Yes, thy words are true, for in thy face I see thy father's, even to the horse-shoe frown between his brows, which he was wont to wear in anger; alas! alas! and to me you lay his sinful life, and—"

"Death, at the hand of his son, Lady Countess."

"No, no, no!"

"Yes: do you not recall that Kenton Cavanaugh, then an honored man in the Royal Navy, killed Hurltel of the Red Hand?"

"Yes; alas! 'tis true, too true."

"And more, Lady of Belmont, for let me hold the cup of anguish to thy fair lips until it is drained to the dregs: dost know that I am the next heir to Belmont?"

"You! In Heaven's name, speak! has harm befallen my son?" and she clutched his arm with trembling hands.

"Thou didst never have a son, Countess of Belmont."

She gazed at him in wild-eyed amazement, and mercifully he went on to tell her the story of the exchange of her dead little girl, for Donald Cameron's boy, a truth which the earl had kept from her.

"And did the Earl of Belmont do this wrong?" she asked, in a voice hardly above a whisper.

"A fortune-teller told him he would never have a son, and impressed by this idea, and to keep the title from my father, when thy girl was born, the earl took advantage of the accidental birth of a boy to Donald Cameron and made the exchange, fair countess."

"I cannot but believe you," she murmured, and a silence of some moments fell between them, which was at last broken by Kyd.

"Lady Countess, the sun is near its setting, and I have business with thy noble husband—"

"Thou wouldst do him no harm?" she eagerly asked.

"On no; he is my uncle, as I did tell you, and I am willing to wait for the earldom, for I am young yet; but wilt thou promise as much for me?"

"What would you have me do?"

"Breathe to no one that you have seen me here, until the morrow, at least."

"You mean no harm?"

"Did I do so, would I trust myself alone in the earl's power? Would I have returned the Bloodhound to Captain St. Vane?"

"I will trust you; but, oh, God! that you should have put upon me another cross to bear."

"I am sorry, Lady Countess, but those of our blood, it seems are doomed to bear heavy crosses through life; I will await here, until thou hast regained the mansion, and as soon as it is dark, I will approach; adieu, my noble aunt Lenore," and he doffed his sable plumed hat, while the countess arose tremblingly, essayed to speak, and then turned quickly away from the arbor, while Kyd stood with folded arms gazing upon her retreating form, a strange smile upon his stern mouth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE EARL AND THE KYD.

THE Earl of Belmont sat alone in his library, his head bent on his hand, his elbow resting upon his desk.

He had been writing until the twilight shadows gathered around him, and when the servant entered with lights it did not interrupt the meditation into which he had fallen.

He really had come to like his new home in far-away America, and the cares of his Governorship did not press severely upon him, so that he was content to remain as long as his king desired that he should.

Presently the door softly opened and a tall cloaked form, with slouching hat, from which drooped a black plume, entered.

At first the earl thought it was one of the finely-feathered young officers from the fort; but turning, the stranger locked the door very coolly and advanced toward the Governor, who

rose, wondering at this strange intrusion, and mysterious act of securing the door.

"I bid you good-evening, sir; but you hold the advantage, as I do not remember you," said the earl, trying to get a look at the face of the visitor, who took a position where the lamp-light did not fall upon his face, and said in low, deep tones:

"It is one of my virtues, my lord, to always hold the advantage; but we have met before, and I now seek you to give information of importance to you."

"Oh! you are not an officer of the fort?"

"I am not, sir; I am one upon whose head you have yourself set the high price of twenty thousand pounds—"

"Hail! there is but one man upon whose head that price is set, and he is—"

"Kyd, the Devil of the Sea, Earl of Belmont."

Had a bombshell suddenly crashed through the window into the room, the Earl of Belmont would not have been more startled than he was at that cool announcement, and he half stepped toward the small tressin upon his table, by which he summoned his servants or the two soldiers constantly on guard at the White Hall.

"Hold! I mean you no harm, my lord, unless you force me to violence, for I am not one to be taken alive."

The impressive tone of Kyd stayed the Governor's hand, and he said:

"Why came you here, sir, where I can place you in irons within the minute?"

"Earl of Belmont, I am no fool. I have played by day and night with your soldiers and vessels; I could have captured you and your family, had I so willed, when I chased you on your way over, and when you did fall into my power, by my taking the cruiser, I released you and your vessel; had I known that you were on board, I would not have attacked you."

"I have warned you of coming danger, and I have returned to you, or to Captain St. Vane, the Bloodhound; now why suspect me of harming you?"

"True, and I cannot understand you, strange man; but you have been a terror upon land and ocean for several years, and merchant craft dread to run the risk of meeting the Devil of the Sea, as men call you, and commerce is at a standstill; now you deliberately come into my own mansion, and say that you are here to warn me of impending danger."

"And I speak the truth, my lord; if I give you warning of danger, do not be foolhardy and disregard it."

"I did not do so before; but the danger you spoke of has not come."

"But will within forty-eight hours."

"By Heaven! do you speak the truth now, sir pirate?"

"I do; the Buccaneer League, comprising a fleet of nine vessels, and of one thousand men, under that old gray-haired pirate-admiral, John Davis, will make a midnight attack upon New York."

"Hail! this is indeed news; but I thought that you were chief of this Buccaneer League."

"No, my lord; the command was offered me; but I have sins enough of my own to answer for, without shouldering those of Davis and his fleet," was the cool reply.

"And this League is to attack New York?"

"Within forty-eight hours."

"With nine vessels and one thousand men?"

"Yes, my lord, against which you can bring the West Fort, seven guns and one hundred men; the East fort, the same; at the city gates, two small guns and thirty men; the Rondeel, nine guns, and two hundred men; your two guard-boats, and the third one which is about ready, carrying seven guns and one hundred and thirty men; the brigantine, twelve guns and one hundred men; the Bloodhound, fifteen guns and one hundred and fifty men; total fifty nine guns and eight hundred and ten men, with about, say twice as many citizen soldiers. You see I am well informed, my lord, as to your exact force."

"There is no denying it; but it is a goodly show against Davis."

"No, my lord; those men are accustomed to hot work; daily and nightly they are in action, and they can run up to your shores, silence your forts, and land a force that will drive your Dutch soldiers into the river, when this fair town will be given up to rapine and robbery."

"You draw a terrible picture, Captain Kyd."

"A true one, my lord; forewarned, however, you are forearmed, and can form your forces so as to give Davis a surprise when he expects to surprise you; this will be half the battle and then, if your men do their duty as brave men should, you can have hope of beating back your enemies; but were you taken by surprise, nothing could save your town from the horrors I have named."

"And why do you thus interest yourself in me, and this province, may I ask, Captain Kyd?"

"Blood is thicker than water, my lord."

"I do not understand."

"I am thy kinsman."

"In the name of the Cross! what mean you, sir pirate?"

"I mean, my lord, that I am the next heir to thy earldom."

The earl tottered back to the table, and leant his hand upon it for a support, while he turned deadly pale, for his conscience pricked him sorely at the words of Kyd.

"I do not understand, Captain Kyd."

"Dost recognize that Hurltel, who won the name of Red Hand, was thy brother?"

"Certainly, notwithstanding his crimes, I cannot deny that."

"Then would not his legitimate son be the next heir to Belmont, thou having no son?"

"True; but I have a son; Lord Gerald of Castle Cor."

"He is not thy son, Earl of Belmont, for, warned by a necromancer, that thou wouldst have no male heir, thou didst—"

"Oh God! my sin has overtaken me, even though my locks are gray," groaned the earl, and he sunk down into his easy-chair, wholly overcome.

"You do not deny thy guilty act, to palm off the son of Donald Cameron as thy own."

"I dare not, for thou must have proof; and he has betrayed me."

"Donald Cameron lies at the bottom of the sea, and so does Agnes, his wife, my lord."

"Ah! then who else knows this secret besides thyself?"

"One who will never make it known."

"Then my crime will not be made known?" gasped the earl, eagerly.

"It need not be, my lord; for Lord Gerald, as you intended he should be called, is dead."

"Dead!"

"Ay, dead; he stood between me and my inheritance, and that thy crime might not be known to the world, I put him to death."

"You! you did this foul wrong?" cried the earl angrily.

"Yes, it saved your guilt from the public gaze, and gives me the right of inheritance without trouble."

"And in the name of the Cross, who are you?"

"I am now known as Kyd, The Devil of the Sea, my lord; but I will sink that name soon, and when I reappear as the heir, none shall know that the son of Hurltel of Castle Crag, was once the famous Ocean Wizard."

"But my brother Hurltel was never married."

"The maiden known as Gipsy Jule was my mother, my lord, and if you desire proof of a marriage between them, they shall be forthcoming."

"You astound me; you, the son of my brother Hurltel; Gerald dead and—"

"It is a nut for you to crack, with a bitter kernel to digest, my lord; but I warn you that I shall be on hand to claim my rights as heir, and I would advise that you consider them."

"Never! a pirate the lineal descendant of Belmont—never, I say!"

"If an earl can drive a brother to evil deeds and despair, by stealing, with his title and riches, his intended bride, and then deceive her and the world with a false heir to the name and rank, a pirate can lay claim to be his successor, my lord."

The Earl winced under this blow, and the chief continued:

"I warn you again, my lord, that I shall be on hand to claim my title and rights, and within two years, as thy brother's son; and once more, I would beg of you, to heed what I have said regarding the Buccaneer League, for ere two nights have passed they will attack you."

"Hold! I have half a mind to summon my soldiers and make you a prisoner," and the earl stretched forth his hand to the tressin.

"Do so, my lord," and Kyd folded his arms calmly across his broad breast and awaited with utmost indifference the result.

The earl stood in hesitation, and then the door opened quickly and a servant appeared.

"My lord, the Lady Countess has been taken suddenly very ill."

"The countess ill, Derrick? I will be with her immediately," cried the earl, in alarm.

"Remember my words, my lord; farewell," and Kyd strode from the room and then out into the darkness of the night, politely returning the salute of the sentinel at the door.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE ATTACK OF THE BUCCANEERS.

As though to hide from its silvery face the scene of blood that must follow in the wake of battle, the moon had shielded herself behind masses of dark clouds in the West long before it reached the horizon, and in darkness a fleet of small vessels were gliding out of the Shrewsbury, where they had laid at anchor for two days, and heading across the lower bay of New York toward the Narrows.

From the pirate-haunted islands of the Indies, the Keys of Florida, the bayous of the Gulf and the lagoons of the Carolinas, came fleet, rakish vessels, armed and equipped as sea robbers, to attack the rich city of Nieuwe Amsterdam.

Like huge white phantoms the fleet sailed on, dropping into single file in passing through the Narrows, and then forming for battle in squadrons, as they came on toward the city, with two of the largest of the vessels to attack the

Rondeel, two more to engage the West and East forts, a couple, crowded with detachments from all the others, to land a large party to operate against the town, and the remainder to carry the king's cruiser, and two guard-boats by boarding, for they were in ignorance of the return of the Bloodhound, and addition of a third guard-boat, their spies not having reported these latter aids to the defenses of the city.

With a discipline won in many a hard fought encounter, the different vessels of the fleet swept into position, and when within a few cable lengths opened upon the silent, and seemingly unsuspecting city; but, with the signal broadside from the large brig on which was the Pirate Admiral, there burst from the Rondeel and the two forts, from the shore, and from the cruisers anchored close inshore, a terrible and destructive fire from half a hundred guns.

For an instant, after the crashing of timbers, groans, curses, and roar of artillery had died away, the buccaneers were paralyzed, for they had felt certain of a complete surprise and were beaten at their own game.

But they were not men to run at a first blow that hurt them, and without hesitation they moved to the attack, as directed, and then the battle became general, the iron hail flew from ship to shore, and from shore to ship, while the rattle of musketry was heard continuously.

Gaining a landing, in spite of all opposition from treble their numbers, with the Earl of Belmont as commander of the townsmen, the pirates slowly pressed their foes back, while the west fort was soon silenced, and the three guard-boats almost as quickly sunk by the larger vessels of the attacking fleet.

But the Bloodhound and brigantine were holding their own manfully, dealing death upon every side, and one of the pirate feluccas had gone down under a broadside which Clement St. Vane had poured upon her.

But blood and repulse seemed but to madden the pirates to greater fierceness, and they charged the Rondeel, determined to turn its guns upon the defending townspeople, and step by step they drove the earl and his soldiers back, while the Brigantine, pursued by two large buccaneer schooners, was driven up East river to the shelter of the eastern fort, and the Bloodhound had to contend against the fearful odds of three to one.

It was a critical moment, and the townsmen saw it to their despair, the pirates seized upon it to their joy; but suddenly, when triumph lighted upon the black flag of the buccaneer, there came a rush in the air like many wings, and above the din and roar was heard:

"Slaves, hurl your iron upon them."

Like a vessel on fire there appeared a low-hulled, rakish schooner that had flown into the midst of the conflict, and before her terrific broadsides, one pirate craft went down beneath the waves, and another was sorely crippled.

And then, to add light, grandeur and wildness to the scene, the Rondeel barracks took fire and the whole harbor was illumined; but in the midst of all was visible the ally of the townsmen, and a cry arose from every deck:

"The Kyd! The Kyd! The Devil of the Sea!"

"Hold, Sir Kyd, you fire upon the vessel of the Buccaneer League," cried the Pirate Admiral in stentorian tones.

"I told you, Davis, New York was my cruising ground, and warned you off—now begone!" came the ringing answer, and again a fearful broadside followed the words of Kyd.

For a short while several of the buccaneer craft moved down upon the Galley Slave, but the Devil of the Sea proved himself well worthy of his name, and his schooner seemed on fire, as her guns flashed, her men stripped to the waist, manning them like demons, and her tall chief standing calm and indifferent upon her decks.

And seeing who it was that had come to their aid the townsmen rallied and fought with desperation, the Rondeel opened with renewed spirit, the brigantine came back once more into the midst of the conflict, the Western fort was retaken by a gallant charge and again sent its iron hail upon the buccaneers, and the Bloodhound shook off its desperate assailants, and ranged down to the support of the Galley Slave.

Under this sudden change the Pirate Admiral saw that it was madness to continue the attack, for one of his vessels was on fire, one was sunk, and another going down, and the remainder were more or less hard hit, so he gave the signal for the retreat, and like a pack of wolves, run off by the hunters, they fled down the bay, followed by the fire from the forts, and pursued by the Bloodhound and brigantine, though both were sorely crippled.

And the Galley Slave?

As soon as the buccaneer fleet retreated, she stood swiftly up East river, received in silence the fire of the Eastern fort, who knew not the good service rendered by the corsair chief, and sped on through Hell Gate toward the open Sound, leaving a scene of death behind.

But triumph over their foes, was an offset to the many dead, and shouts of joy rolled over the town, mingling with the groans of the dying.

In the midst of the congratulations bestowed upon the earl, a servant from the White Hall sought him, and said:

"My lord, the Countess Lenore is dying."

The loving husband, for he had loved her with all his heart, bent his head in bitter grief, and wended his way rapidly toward the mansion, where at sunset he had left her lying in a critical condition, for at last her proud aching heart had broken under the grief of years.

He had won a victory, but he had lost a wife, for when he reached the bedside, Lady Kate and Lady Grace were weeping bitterly over the dead, for, amid the din of carnage the Countess of Lenore's spirit had taken flight.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BLOODHOUND ON THE SCENT.

THE Countess Lenore was buried in pomp in her new home, and a vast concourse followed her to the grave, for the sweet-faced lady had won the hearts of all.

The wreck of battle had been cleared away, the forts strengthened, the small army of the earl reorganized, and a small fleet of guard-boats were reserved as a support to the Bloodhound and brigantine.

And yet though all knew that they owed it, that the town had not been sacked, to Kyd, none felt like giving the credit of their safety to their bitterest foe, and even Clement St. Vane and the earl were chagrined that the Devil of the Sea held the advantage of them, and in a secret conference, between the Governor and his young fleet commander, it was decided that the Bloodhound must at once fully equip, and with a large crew put to sea and hunt the pirate down.

"I have a particular motive for this, St. Vane, and if you kill Kyd, I will promise you a commodore's pennant for the Bloodhound; mind you, show him no quarter, or any of his crew, and you will win a great name," said the earl.

"I certainly am most willing, my lord, and the Bloodhound shall sail within three days."

"And then, St. Vane, as the Lady Kate has consented to become your wife, your marriage might as well take place, and you can both sail for England, and I will send dispatches by you to the king."

A glad light came into the eyes of the young American captain, and he left the mansion, to hasten up the repairs on his vessel, and within the appointed time, the Bloodhound spread her wings and flew down the harbor, Lady Kate watching her departure from her window, her heart overwhelmed with strange emotions, for though she did not love Clement St. Vane with all her heart, she had promised him her hand in marriage, frankly telling him that her first and only grand passion was for another, who was dead to her.

With this Clement St. Vane had been content, and it was with a heart beating high with hope that he sailed in pursuit of Kyd, hoping by his capture to add new fame to his name.

Having rounded Sandy Hook and gained an offing, the Bloodhound ran down the coast, leaving the Highlands of Neversink upon her starboard quarter.

Upon her deck stood Clement St. Vane, sweeping the coast and sea horizon with his glass, and longing to catch sight of the rakish pirate, which had only two days before, captured three, out of a fleet of five, merchantmen bound into New York, and again proven that he was determined to wage war against the commerce of the province, even though he did aid in its defense against other sea rovers.

The buccaneer fleet, after repairing damages, as well as they could, in the lower bay, had set sail for more congenial scenes in southern waters, one and all, from the Pirate Admiral Davis, down to the humblest seaman, swearing vengeance against Kyd, who had defeated their attack upon the wealthy city of New York.

Therefore Clement St. Vane felt no hope of coming upon any of these sea marauders, and in fact only cared to meet Kyd.

Some hours after running the coast down, there came from the foremast-head the exciting cry:

"Sail ho!"

All eyes at once turned ahead, and upon the starboard bow, just coming out from the shelter of one of these numerous inlets that form a network of land, as it were, on the Jersey coast, was visible a large schooner.

It was evident that the Bloodhound had been first seen from the stranger's deck, for she was heading up the coast as though to meet the king's craft, and under easy working sails.

Seizing his glass, Clement St. Vane leveled it at the schooner, and cried exultingly:

"It is the Kyd! A red ribbon runs around her bows, and she shows the same tall masts and long spars that mark the Galley Slave."

"And there she shows her teeth, sir," said the officer next in command, as the ports were opened on the sides, showing a tier of six guns to each broadside, besides her three pivot heavy pieces, mounted forward, amidships and aft.

"She is a beautiful craft, and her bow is as sharp as a regatta-boat, while she can spread

canvas enough for a vessel three times her tonnage," said the captain, admiringly.

"And withal, a dangerous foe, sir; but we have three guns more than he has, and I guess nearly double as many men, so there is no doubt of the result," remarked Lieutenant Fannin.

"No, there must be no doubt: we must take the schooner, Fannin," answered Clement St. Vane firmly.

"By boarding, or will you give him the full force of your guns first, sir?"

"Yes, we must cripple him all we can at long range, and then board: call to quarters, Fannin."

Instantly the cutter was a scene of excitement; the guns were double-shotted, the hammock nettles were more firmly stowed, hand grenades were put in racks along the bulwarks, the arm-stands for cutlasses, muskets and pistols encircling the masts, were filled, and the officers and crew armed to the teeth, while the sails were furled closely, excepting just what were needed to keep the vessel in good working order.

"Men, there is to be no back down in this fight: yonder is Kyd, The Devil of the Sea, and he is in his famous craft Galley Slave."

"There is a large reward offered for his capture, and his vessel is rich in gold and precious stones, all of which shall be divided among you."

"Kyd shows no mercy: let no mercy be shown him or his men; the man on this craft that shirks his duty I will kill: those who do their duty will reap a golden harvest of wealth, and a fame that will never die."

"If there are any cowards on the Bloodhound let them speak now, for the shore is but a league away, and I will send them there in a boat."

The speech of the young captain was received with a ringing cheer, and up to the peak went the broad flag of England, and upon its blood-red field were displayed the united crosses.

A moment after a flash came from her bows, and a shot was sent across the pirate's forefoot.

All awaited the result, and it soon came, for up to the fore went a flag with a red field and in its center was the black plume, while at the peak was unfolded the huge sable ensign of the pirate, with its white skeleton form, holding in its right hand a red cutlass, and in its left the heart and arrow symbol of Kyd, while one bony foot rested upon the World, and the other upon the Bible: a hideous, fearful flag to look upon, defiant of both God and man.

In spite of their nerve the crew of the Bloodhound felt a thrill of horror, for they saw that the pirate was seeking, not avoiding a conflict.

Seeing the uneasiness among his crew, Clement St. Vane called out:

"Men, you see your game: let the Bloodhound run him to cover, and your reward shall be great."

A cheer was the answer, and two vessels now headed for each other, silent and determined.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A COMBAT TO THE DEATH.

"GIVE him a broadside, Fannin!"

The order of Clement St. Vane was at once obeyed, and the cutter reeled under the shock, while her iron hail fell upon the pirate with terrible effect, cutting away her foretopmast, crashing through her bulwarks, laying several of the crew upon the decks, and dismounting one of the larboard guns.

"Bravo! lads, you have hit him hard," cried the young captain joyously.

But the Galley Slave did not seem to be thrown into any confusion; her crew were too well used to hard knocks, and almost instantly came an answering broadside, but of grape.

The effect was fearful upon the Bloodhound's crew, though, excepting cutting a few ropes, and making air holes in the sails, it did no damage to the vessel.

"Ah! that is his game, is it? A score of men on the decks; we must close with him, Mr. Fannin; but first get the weather gauge," cried Clement St. Vane, shocked by the havoc of the pirate's broadside upon his men.

The vessels were now within hailing distance, and the men on each could see the faces of their foes, and all on the Bloodhound beheld the tall form of the Kyd standing near the wheel, calm and commanding, and dressed for the fray in shoulder guards and helmet, and armed with a cutlass, and a row of pistols in his belt.

Above his helmet waved the sable plume he always wore upon his head-dress, and upon his feet were high boots, with embroidered tops.

"Stand by with those hand-grenades! boarders stand ready! have those grapnels on hand to throw!" called out Clement St. Vane; but though his orders were evidently heard on board the Galley Slave they had no effect; the crew of the pirate knew too well their red-handed duty, to need instructions from their chief.

With appalling stillness the two vessels approached each other, the wind coming from the seaward, upon the port beam of the Bloodhound, and starboard of the Galley Slave, and both close hauled and moving at an equal speed, with only their fighting sails set.

Nearer and still nearer they came, until suddenly from the pirate's bows burst two clouds

of smoke, and once more the fearful storm of grape swept the decks of the king's cruiser, and with the same deadly effect.

"Ha! he'll have our crew down to his own numbers, if he tries that again. Stand by, hand grenades!" shouted Captain St. Vane.

"Ay ay, sir!"

"Cast!"

But, as the order left his lips the bows of the Galley Slave swept up, and the deadly missiles fell short, and dropped into the sea; but the movement, in the cloud of smoke from the pirate's bow-guns, was unseen by St. Vane, and he therefore did not give the order to let the Bloodhound's bows fall off, and holding on her course she struck the buccaneer bows on, with a terrific crash, that crushed in his hull, and sent every man on each vessel flat down with the shock.

"Give him a broadside, and follow me!"

It was Kyd that spoke, and although the schooner had heeled over, and the water was pouring in torrents into the huge wound in her side, the pirates poured in several shots of grape upon her, and then, in the check that it gave the Bloodhound's boarders, followed Kyd over the sharp bows of the cutter.

Like harlequins they hurled themselves forward and into the air, falling upon the Bloodhound's decks, and at times upon the heads of the crew.

"The pirate is sinking!" came in a loud voice from Clement St. Vane, and knowing that his words were true the buccaneers rushed over the cutter's bows with an irresistible stream, while in thunder tones, Kyd shouted:

"Slaves, your craft goes down! take this one!"

A yell answered him, and the crew of the Bloodhound were forced back from her bows, as the Galley Slave's men poured upon her decks, and not a moment too soon, for with a mighty lurch, that snapped off the cutter's bowsprit, which had run under the fore-rigging of the schooner, the famous craft sunk beneath the waves, causing the king's vessel to reel and toss wildly in the vortex of the water that she left behind her.

For an instant pirates and king's men stood appalled; but, as the waves dragged under the black flag, Kyd shouted:

"Sea Devils! there goes one Galley Slave! this shall be another!"

He bounded forward, amid the demoniacal yells of his wild crew, as he spoke, and with almost brute ferocity they drove the cutter's defenders from the fore-castle.

"Beat them back, Bloodhounds! the black flag has once floated over this deck, let it never do so again. No mercy to the sea cutthroats!" cried Clement St. Vane, throwing himself forward to resist the fearful onslaught.

From side to side the waves of savage humanity swayed, now pressing forward, now reeling aft, and above them rolled the shouts, curses, commands, shots and steel clashes, with a deep bass accompaniment in the groans of dying men, trod ruthlessly under foot.

With herculean strength Kyd wielded his long and keen cutlass, and seemingly bearing a charmed life, he hewed a way through the human line in front, ever and anon shouting, as the cutter's crew were forced back:

"They say no mercy, ye Devils of the Sea! Such show them! A strong blow and this craft is our Galley Slave."

Inspired by their leader the pirates fought more like demons than men, and rapidly the king's crew greatly diminished before them.

"Ha! Sir Kyd, we meet at last!" and Clement St. Vane confronted the chief, and in his hand he held the sword given him by the pirate, and the rope presented at the same time, was coiled over the right shoulder and under the left arm.

"Ah! Captain St. Vane, we are well met!" shouted Kyd, as he sprung forward to cross blades with him.

"I have here thy sword with which to disarm thee, and thy rope to string thee up," cried Clement St. Vane.

"You honor me, Captain St. Vane," answered Kyd, with a sneer, and then he shouted:

"Room here, men, that I may teach this gallant captain a lesson."

But as their blades crossed the struggling crowd bore them apart, and for some moments they were not near each other again.

But at length once more they came face to face, their cutlasses came together with a ring, in spite of the blood that was upon them, and with the third pass Clement St. Vane was taught a lesson, for his blade was struck from his hand, and he realized that, expert swordsman that he was, that Kyd was his superior.

Again were the two leaders pressed apart, Lieutenant Fannin picking up his captain's sword, and with it confronting Kyd.

It was the last act of the brave lieutenant's life, for the Devil of the Sea cut him down with one sweeping blow, while bending over, he tore his sword from his grasp, and pitching it far over upon the heads of the king's men, shouted:

"Give this back to your captain."

But step by step the cutter's crew were forced back, beyond the waist, and then aft to the quarter-deck, and here the remnant that re-

mained made another desperate stand: but it was useless; the pirates knew no equals in the mad fight for life, and with yells like demons, swept over the little band, all of whom went down before them.

"Ha! the king's craft is ours! Three cheers for the new Galley Slave!" shouted Kyd, and his panting, bleeding, frenzied men gave it with a ferocious will.

"By the Cross! half of my men gone; but all the Bloodhounds, for there lies the gallant captain. Into the sea with them all, and clear the deck, Lennox!"

"Do you mean of our men too, sir?" asked the pirate lieutenant, binding up a wound on his head.

"Yes, dead and wounded! king's men and pirates! Throw any man into the sea who cannot stand on his feet," was the cruel and merciless order of Kyd.

A groan went up from the decks, and fully a score of men staggered to their feet, some of them being king's men; but these latter were promptly hurled overboard.

And then, one by one the bodies of the dead and wounded were thrown into the sea, until Kyd suddenly called out:

"Don't throw the body of Captain St. Vane over, for I shall send that as a gift to the Earl of Belmont."

"It is already gone, sir," answered Lennox.

"Too bad; but never mind, the earl shall soon know the fate of his intended son-in-law; Manuel, rig a new bowsprit, and get sail on the Galley Slave."

"Lieutenant Manuel is dead, sir," answered Lennox.

"Then you see to it, Lennox," and Kyd turned and entered the cabin of the vessel he had captured, a fierce light in his dark eyes.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

KYD AGAIN VISITS THE SORCERESS.

HAVING repaired all damages, sent the wounded below, and set sail, the Galley Slave, late the Bloodhound, moved away from the scene of the fearful combat, headed up the coast, and crossing the entrance to New York bay, stood along the low shore of Long Island.

The wind holding fair the next day saw her in the Sound, and apparently on the way to New York.

But, arriving near Hell Gate just at sunset, the vessel dropped anchor, a boat was called alongside, and springing into it Kyd was rowed to the small island where the Sorceress Zebel, held her weird incantations.

She stood upon the shore awaiting him, and, as he joined her, said abruptly:

"You again command the king's cruiser."

"Yes; but how knew you that, woman?"

Without telling him that she had sailed down the bay behind the cruiser, and from her lofty perch on the Highlands, whither she had gone to seek him, she had witnessed the battle, the shrewd Sorceress answered:

"I saw in my dream a sea-battle; a black flag was devoured by the waves, but those who fought beneath its sable folds, beat those who fought under the united colors of England, and—"

"Enough; your art teaches you many things we mortals, less gifted, cannot know; hast been to the town lately, woman?"

"Yes; yesterday, I was there; the countess died of a broken heart, her spirit taking flight amid the din of carnage."

"The Countess Lenore dead?" said Kyd, thoughtfully.

"Yes; but thou didst a noble deed, Kyd, when thou didst save the town from the Buccaneer League."

"I acted for my own ends, woman; not through mercy, for excepting those the roof of the White Hall shelters, I care not for those of the town," he answered fiercely.

"Well, has not my charm protected thee through all?"

"It has, Zebel; I received no scratch, though I was in the midst of battle, and half of my men fell dead around me."

"Then thy vessel is short-handed now?"

"Yes, I have but forty for duty, and a dozen ill of wounds, some of whom may die; but it matters not now, for my work on the sea is about ended."

"What mean you, Kyd?"

"I mean that I came for the treasure I sent to you to keep for me."

"It is safer here."

"No, I shall run down to Amboy and bury it in an old church-yard there; then I shall seek Kate of Belmont, and if she promises to become my wife, when I go for her one year hence at Castle Cor, and the earl swears to acknowledge me as his heir, then will I haul down my pirate flag, and live in seclusion until that time."

"And if they both refuse?"

"Then I shall kidnap Kate of Belmont, force a priest to unite us, and live in seclusion until the earl recognizes me as Cor's lord."

"And should he decline?"

"Then he shall die, and I'll proclaim myself earl, as the son of Hurltel of Castle Crag, for none can dispute my claim, and no one there knows me as Kyd."

"You are on the right path, Captain Kyd, and if you need aid from me, command me; but when you are Earl of Belmont, or its lord, I have a favor to ask."

"Name it."

"Give me Castle Crag, Hurltel's Roost, Death Castle whatever men call it."

"Thou shalt have it with my blessing, or curse, whichever thou deemest most fitting."

"I prefer thy curse, Kyd; but now thou wishest thy ill-gotten riches?"

"Yes."

"Thy booty is in my cabin; send your men for it, and I will let my slave go with thee, to bury it with the rites that will prevent any of thy crew seeking to rob thee of it."

"So be it; my treasure place on Staten Island is known only to me, for the three men that aided me in burying it, I hurled into the sea to keep the secret, while the ten who buried the booty on Montauk you will find in the dungeon of Castle Death, along with the bones of Gerald Cameron, and I had intended to get rid of those who went with me to bury the booty you hold," he said, with the utmost indifference of tone.

"Let them live; they will not dare approach the spot after the rites my slave will perform; but thou hast a king's wealth, Kyd."

"Ay, more, woman," and turning he hailed the boat that had brought him there, and ordered the men to come after the treasure.

With fear and trembling they obeyed, and having removed the booty, a score of small iron-bound kegs, they were glad to get away from the burning eyes of the Sorceress, and looked with no pleasant humor upon the African slave she commanded to accompany Kyd, and who carried with him a mysterious bag of implements necessary in his rude necromancy.

It was late when the booty had been transferred to the hold of the vessel, and Kyd remained at anchor until morning.

Then he set sail and steered into the wild waters of Hell Gate.

Upon her island stood the Sorceress, who cried out, as she saw them heading for New York:

"Beware, sir pirate, or thou wilt yet run thy handsome head into the gallows' noose."

"Not while I wear thy hellish charm, woman," he recklessly answered.

But she shouted back:

"Beware, Kyd; or thou wilt wear a halter instead of an earl's coronet."

A mocking laugh was her reply, and the fleet vessel sped on through Hell Gate, heading fearlessly for New York.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

THE Eastern fort aroused the worthy citizens of New York to busy action, an hour after Kyd passed through Hell Gate, and startled them with a dread of coming danger.

But they soon learned that it was a salute to the Bloodhound, which was coming down the Sound under full sail, and had signaled that the famous Galley Slave had been sunk in action.

Passing the fort, with the proud flag of England at the peak, the vessel swept swiftly past the town, saluted by, and saluting the Rondeel, and then putting about and laying to just off Governor's Island, while she dipped her flag in honor to the salutes of the guard-boats, for the brigantine was away on a short cruise.

By this time the town was wild with excitement, for the news had quickly spread, that the Bloodhound had signaled the sinking of the Galley Slave, and crowds were gathered upon the shore to witness the landing of the gallant young victor over Kyd, and in the Governor's mansion, Lady Kate and Lady Grace stood at the window, pale, anxious and awaiting the dread result, for if Clement St. Vane was victorious, then the Kyd must be either dead, or a captive in irons.

But suddenly the cutter swung round once more, fired a gun to windward, and down came the red colors of England, up to the peak went the black flag of the pirate, and the symbol of Kyd to the fore, with its scarlet field and black plume.

At first it was not understood; but, as the ports flew open, and the crew were all seen at quarters, a groan went up from the crowd, who now comprehended that the gallant St. Vane and his men, who had gone forth to capture the pirate, had fallen into the hands of the terrible Kyd.

But the Kyd seemed content not to turn his guns upon the town, and headed seaward, followed by a rapid fire from the Rondeel.

Running out of range, the Galley Slave dropped anchor.

And all that day did Lady Kate of Belmont gaze upon the distant vessel, a glass having shown her the tall form of Kyd pacing the deck.

And, as she watched she saw a light skiff put off from the shore of Long Island and approach the vessel, and the occupant run under the stern of the Galley Slave, and not reappear upon the other side.

A few moments after the skiff put back shoreward, and bending her powerful glass upon it, Lady Kate said to her cousin, who was seated in the room reading:

"Grace, the Sorceress of Hell Gate has been out to the vessel, and is now returning."

Lady Grace approached the window, and a glance through the glass, handed her by Lady Kate, convinced her that it was indeed the Sorceress, and she said musingly:

"What can she mean by going there?"

"I cannot tell; no good I'll warrant," and while Grace returned to her book, her cousin still continued her watching, until the shadows of twilight shut the vessel from sight.

"Lady, wilt come to the river wing? I have a *billet-doux* for thy fair hand."

Kate started, for the voice came from beneath the window, and looking out she beheld Zebel, the Sorceress.

Her cousin had gone out to attend to some household duties, and unable to resist the temptation, the maiden crept quietly down-stairs, and soon stood at the window opening upon the lawn that sloped to the river.

"The captain of yonder vessel bade me give this to thy hands," said Zebel, and thrusting a sealed letter into the trembling fingers of Lady Kate, she glided away.

A servant just then entered with the lamps, and when he had gone Lady Kate broke the seal, and with trembling hand, and white, scared face, read:

ON BOARD GALLEY SLAVE:

"LADY KATE: More than thou canst comprehend now depends upon my seeing thee this night, for from thy presence will I go either to good or evil for the remainder of my life; so refuse not to grant my request, and meet me at moonrise, at the arbor on the North river bank."

"I would change my mad career, and upon thy lips hangs my future destiny."

"I will be there, and I implore you to grant this boon to me."

KENTON."

"Oh, God! what shall I do? What shall I do?" and the maiden sunk down in her chair.

"No word of why he commands the Bloodhound, or of Clement St. Vane's fate. I must know all that has happened, and from his lips only can I learn it."

"Oh, Virgin Mother, guide me in this, for thou knowest that I love him in spite of his crimes, and that him only can I love!"

She had dropped on her knees during this brief supplication, and resting her head on her hands, she murmured:

"Perhaps my seeing him may bring him out of his vile career, for oh, how noble, how brave he could be if not The Kyd!"

She started to her feet as the door suddenly opened, and her father entered, accompanied by one whose coming brought a cry to her lips, for it was Clement St. Vane.

But oh! how changed. His uniform was wet and earth-stained, his face white and haggard, and upon each feature rested a look of suffering.

Beholding the maiden he bowed with his usual courtly grace, but said sadly:

"I can expect no welcome, lady, from thee, for I have lost my vessel."

"Nevertheless thou art welcome, Captain St. Vane, and doubly so since you seem to be suffering," she said, in a kindly tone.

"So said I, my child, for the captain has had a hard time of it, I can see; but remain, and he will tell us what has happened," said the earl, while he motioned the young officer to a seat.

"The story is soon told, my lord," he said, with a sad smile. "I sailed in pursuit of that fiend in human form, Kyd, and sighted him running out of an inlet on the Jersey coast, and as anxious for battle as we were."

"We opened fire at short range, I with shot, he with grape, and we badly crippled his vessel, while we lost heavily in men."

"But in running down to board we collided with such force that we stove in his side, and as his vessel began to sink he called to his men to board and take the Bloodhound."

"I need not recount the fearful combat, for they fought like demons, and, in spite of my superior numbers, drove us steadily aft; twice I crossed blades with him, but the first time we were forced apart by the surging masses, and the second he disarmed me."

"Disarmed you, St. Vane?"

"Yes, my lord; he handles a blade like no mortal man, and he struck my sword, the one he had given me, from my grasp, and spared my life, while poor Fannin, seizing the weapon from the deck sprung forward and was at once killed by the Kyd, who seemed to bear a charmed life."

"At last, with an irresistible rush they swept the decks, and myself and crew went down, I stunned by a blow; the next I remembered, I was beneath the water, and struggling to the surface, beheld the sea dotted with the dead and wounded, for he threw all overboard, not sparing his own men who were badly hurt, and rapidly repairing damages the Bloodhound lay not far away."

"Two miles distant I saw the green shores, and though dizzy from the blow on my head, and bleeding from several slight wounds, I determined to make an effort to escape and I did so, reaching shallow water when wholly exhausted."

"At the camp of a friendly Indian hunter, I found shelter, and he guided me to the shore opposite, and swimming the river I am here to

make my sad report, the only survivor of the gallant Bloodhound; but, I swear it, my lord, and Lady Kate, I shall live for revenge against that Devil of the Sea."

"That is right, St. Vane; recapture the cruiser, and kill Kyd, and the defeat you have met with shall be wiped out," said the earl.

"The brigantine is here, my lord?"

"No, and the Kyd lies at anchor a league down the harbor; but I dispatched a guard-boat up the river whither the brigantine went yesterday and with the force you can raise, you can overwhelm the pirate, for his decks must have been greatly thinned by his fight with you."

"He lost fearfully, my lord; but I lost all; yet now I feel like a new man, and shall at once set to work upon my plan of attack, and if I cannot, with the brigantine and three guard-boats, capture Kyd, then I do not deserve to hold the rank I do," and accompanied by the earl, Clement St. Vane left the room, while Lady Kate, glancing from the window, and seeing that the red glare in the east denoted moonrise, went to her room, and prepared for her tryst with Kyd.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SECRET TRYST.

ABOVE the Brooklyn Heights soared the moon, throwing its radiance over harbor and town, and far down toward the Narrows the outline of the captured Bloodhound was discernible to those on the Rondeel ramparts.

Up the East river a busy scene was going on at the docks, for, under the supervision of Clement St. Vane, pale and haggard looking, yet determined, the guard-boats were being thoroughly fitted for action, and on shore near the Western fort a couple of hundred soldiers were ready to place on board the brigantine and other guard-boat as soon as they came down the river.

And at the White Hall the earl and his staff sat in consultation, none seeing the cloaked form that glided out of the western portal, and dodged from tree to tree toward the river.

An open space of lawn she crossed at rapid pace, and then, at the arbor, above which stood a large oak tree, she paused, her form trembling, her heart throbbing violently.

"Lady Kate, I appreciate the honor done me," said a deep voice from within the shadow, and stepping forth the Kyd led her to the river side of the arbor, saying quietly:

"I wish to have my eye down the harbor on my vessel and up the river for the brigantine, as well as upon thy sweet face, lady, for I have risked much to come here."

"Then why didst thou come?"

"To meet thee, fair lady; to breathe into thy ears that I love thee—"

"Silence, sir! this to Lady Kate Belmont from a pirate?" she said in an angry tone.

"Pirate no longer, lady, if thou but wilt," he said softly.

"What mean you, sir?"

"I mean, Kate, that the cruel curse upon me, in being the son of thy uncle, Hurtel of the Red Hand, drove me—"

"No, no, no!" she gasped; but he went on in the same calm way:

"So accursed, in a moment of madness I linked myself with pirates, and well you know what I have become; but, at last, my love for thee is such that I have determined to give up my evil life, and seek another land, where I will remain until I come to claim thee as my bride, for the few who know me as the Kyd will never betray my secret."

"What! I link my fate with thine, Kenton Cavanaugh? Never!"

"And this is your answer?"

"Yes; go from me and change thy mad career; go and sin no more, but repent thy evil deeds in sackcloth and ashes, and pray to thine offended God for pardon."

"I seek pardon of thee, Kate of Belmont."

"Prove that thou canst repent, and then I will forgive."

"And become my bride?"

"Never! between thy life and mine, Kenton Cavanaugh, flows a river of crime that can never be crossed."

"Ha! perhaps, then, thou dost love another—the handsome Captain St. Vane, as I have heard," he said fiercely, and, in a spirit of anger she answered:

"Yes, that noble man is my affianced husband."

"Ha! ha! ha! then thou wilt have to hug to thy fond heart his skeleton form, for I captured his vessel, as you saw to-day, when I ran to the forts, and he now lies at the bottom of the sea."

It was on Lady Kate's tongue to tell him that Clement St. Vane was not dead; but she checked herself, and said:

"And do you, thus stained with the blood of noble men, come and ask forgiveness of me?"

"Yes; if I drop the name of Kyd, and prove my repentance, wilt thou become my wife?"

"I have answered, no!"

"Then, my sweet cousin, by the holy Cross! thou shalt wed me by my will, if not by thine."

He seized her, as he spoke, and would have

borne her to his boat, not thirty paces distant; but she writhed loose from his strong grasp, and turned to fly; yet quickly he pursued her, and turning she threw out her hand, armed with a pistol she had torn from his belt, and cried in a threatening tone:

"Back, sir pirate, or I fire!"

With a light laugh he sprang toward her, and she pulled the trigger of the weapon and the flash and report followed.

A curse escaped his lips, and he spun half round, while his right arm dropped to his side; but, with a deer's speed, Kate fled, and seeing that the report of the pistol had alarmed the inmates of the mansion, he walked back to his boat, sprang into the stern-sheets, and ordered his men to pull down the harbor for his vessel.

Boldly and recklessly steering out into the river, his boat was seen by the earl and his staff, who met Lady Kate, breathless with excitement, at the door, and to her father's eager questions she answered:

"I was on the lawn; the Kyd attempted to kidnap me, and drawing one of his own pistols from his belt I fired upon him."

"And didst kill him?" excitedly asked the earl.

"No, father, but I wounded him, I am sure; but see, yonder goes his boat back to his vessel."

The alarm was at once given, and an aide ran at full speed to the Rondeel, while a soldier hurried to the Western fort to tell the commandants to open on the retreating boat and sink it.

Messengers were also sent to the guard-boats to pursue, and within five minutes the Western fort opened, then the Rondeel followed suit, with guns and musketry, and a perfect hail of iron was sent after the daring buccaneer, who held on his course unswervingly, apparently bearing a charmed life.

At length he got out of range, and not a moment too soon, for four of his six oarsmen had fallen, and the water was pouring into the boat through its shattered sides.

But grimly Kyd held on, his hand upon the tiller, while his two remaining oarsmen tugged manfully for life, dreading as much their stern and silent chief as the fire of the forts.

Presently a guard-boat swept round the shores of Governor's Island in pursuit; but over the heads of Kyd and his men flew a shot, which quickly caused the little craft to put about, and brought from the chief's stern lips:

"Bravo! Lennox; your coming has saved us!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE SACRIFICE TO FETISH.

THOUGH Kyd felt that, had not his lieutenant, suspecting danger to his chief, upon hearing the firing, boldly stood up the harbor to his succor, he would have been taken by the guard-boat, he showed no sign of excitement upon reaching his deck, and said in his calm way:

"You two lads did well: throw that carrion into the sea, and have that boat up at the davits at once: Lennox, I thank you for your coming: head for the Raritan."*

It was midnight when Kyd dropped anchor off what is now Perth Amboy, and near where a promontory jutted out, into Staten Island Sound.

Upon this headland stood a small stone church, with the village of the dead around it, while beyond, a quarter of a mile, was the village of the living.

"Get the booty into a boat, Lennox, with the same crew that rowed me to the isle of the Sorceress, and also have that black imp of Satan go with me."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the young lieutenant, and ten minutes after, the heavily laden boat put off for the shore, landing near the church.

Going ahead of his men, Kyd sought through the little grave-yard, until he found what he wished—a *new made grave*.

A low whistle brought his men to his side, each bearing a treasure cask, and the chief said, bluntly:

"Throw out this earth."

At once they began the work, and soon the coffin, with its decaying form, was brought to the surface, the white shrouded form glimmering with spectral light through the splintered wood.

"All ready, Captain Kyd," said the coxswain.

"And I am ready too; all hands to bury treasure!" he said, grimly, and the fierce crew gathered around the open grave.

"Hats off!" now thou ebony Hellhound, I command thee to bury this treasure from human eye, and bestow Satan's curse upon him who digs to find that which has cost me rivulets of blood to gain."

"I am ready; the Fetish will listen to my cry, and, excepting thy hand, oh skimmer of the deep, dig for this golden treasure, may it wither and drop off—may the curse of his mother fall upon him—may his soul be forfeit to my master, the Devil."

The deep tones of the African, and his impressive manner of delivery, added to his hideous looks, sent a shudder to every heart.

Then he walked slowly thrice around the open grave, each time placing his hand upon the coffin, and halting, he chanted, rather than said:

* New Perth Amboy.—THE AUTHOR.

"Here lies countless treasure—
Jewels, stones of rare price—
Gold and silver unmeasured:
Each gem, each ounce of gold,
Each pound of silver,
Is stained with human gore—
Each and all have cost human souls!
What is so dearly bought
Let us securely hide from human gaze;
And, therefore, with mystic sign we
Commit to the earth this red treasure."

He sprang down into the grave, and, one by one, the booty kegs he took and placed upon the bottom, until all were hidden from sight.

Then, in a voice wild and strange, he chanted forth:

"Beelzebub, Prince of Air, mortal men thy power dread;
Apollyon, Prince of Sea, mortal men thy fury fear;
Sathanas, Prince of Hades, mortal men thy vices shun;
Then bring thou curses deep upon him who would
this treasure seek; we plead by Air, by Earth, by
Sea, by Sky, and by the all-destroying Fire, and to
thee dost give the sacrifice."

As he spoke he took from the huge bag he had brought, and which lay near him, a black object, which the horrified seamen now discovered was a cat.

Again chanting he sung:

"No wound or blight,
Must meet the right:
Above the grave,
The victim wave:
At the first blow
The blood must flow."

At his last words, by a dexterous movement of his long knife he severed the head of the black cat from the body, and dropped both into the grave.

Then he turned to the bag once more and took something out, and again chanted:

"This book, this book, with name unspoken
Here finds a grave, or the charm is broken;
Then he who seeks will seek in vain,
And those who dig shall dig again;
For safe from any human eye
Shall this treasure safely lie."

He bowed thrice, slowly and with his hands upon his forehead, and remaining silent Kyd asked:

"Hast finished thy rites, slave?"

In a sepulchral tone he answered:

"Finished all the rites shall be,
Mortal, thou hast sought from me,
When a being who has seen
The treasure placed the earth within,
Shall in this grave alive be thrown—
This done, this spot shall ne'er be known."

"Dost matter who?" asked Kyd, as his men recoiled at the horrible words of the African, and there was a strange ring in his voice:

"It matters not who here may lie,
So he beneath the earth doth die."

"Then, imp of Satan, I dedicate thee as the sacrifice," and dragging the African half out of the grave he hurled him back with fearful force, and shouted in clarion tones:

"Throw in the dirt, devils, and cover his hideous form from sight."

Quickly seizing the coffin Kyd threw it upon top of the doomed slave, while the men sprang to work and shoveled the wet, heavy earth in so rapidly that the struggling African could not free himself from the weight upon him, and soon the struggles ceased.

Making the grave over as it was before, and ordering his men to bear with them to the water the surplus earth, Kyd turned to retrace his way to the boat, when suddenly a bright flash came from off on the Sound, and the deep boom of a heavy gun, sent a thousand echoes rumbling along the green shores and forest-clad hills.

"It is an alarm from Lennox! ay, by the Cross! see yonder! to your boats, men!" and as Kyd sternly ordered he bounded down the hillside, followed by his men, for all eyes had fallen upon four vessels coming rapidly up from seaward, and heading for the Galley Slave.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AT LAST.

WHEN Kyd left the Raritan shore with his boat, he hoped to be able to reach his vessel before his foes, and once on board he felt he could give them a running fight of it, and keep them at bay, for, with his diminished crew he dare not attempt to give them battle in the defiant style that was his wont.

But, urge on his men as he did, he saw that it would be impossible for him to reach the Galley Slave, for the leading vessel, which he now discovered by the moonlight was the king's brigantine, was running on at a fearful pace without shortening sail, and in her wake were the three guard-boats.

A moment more, and feeling that it was hopeless to proceed, he hailed in his clarion tones:

"Set her afire, Lennox, and take to your boats!"

"Ay, ay, sir," came cheerily across the waters; but before obeying, the gallant lieutenant thought to check the progress of the brigantine, and, as the cruiser swung round, he poured a broadside upon her which was felt in every spar by the king's craft, and momentarily checked her speed; but it was the dying stroke

of the pirate vessel, for as Lennox and his men were lowering their boats there came a broadside of red-hot shot, and one, penetrating the magazine, sent the Galley Slave into a thousand atoms, with a concussion that shook the land, was heard in New York, and illumined the waters and shore for a league around.

"For your lives now, give way!"

The stern order of Kyd recalled his boat's crew to action, and he headed up the narrow sound between Staten Island and the Jersey shore.

But the brigantine still held on, running over the very waters into which had fallen the mangled bodies, missiles and fragments of the Galley Slave, and with the eyes of her crew upon the flying boat, opened fire, in which she was seconded by her three smaller consorts.

Unheeding the shots that flew about them, Kyd said calmly:

"The craft has gone, lads; but if we had three score of your fellows we'd take yonder brigantine; as it is we will head for New York and throw ourselves on board some fleet coaster, for our pursuers cannot follow us through here with this low tide."

As if to prove his words, the brigantine was seen to suddenly put about, and the three guard-boats coming up followed her example.

"Hal! they touched bottom sooner than I thought; now pull for your lives, lads!" cried Kyd, and cheered by the mishap to their pursuers the rowers bent with double energy to their work.

"There come the brigantine's boats, sir," said the bow oarsman.

"You are right, Haslip; her commander knows his duty, for he will pursue in the boats, while the vessels have to run round Staten Island; make your oars bend, men!"

And make their oars bend they did, for fully they realized their danger, as four boats had put off from the brigantine, and one from each of the guard-boats, and they carried over a hundred men, while Kyd had not a dozen.

"But still he did not despair, though it was a long pull to the town, but with the start he had he hoped to cut out a merchant craft, run the gantlet of the Eastern fort, and escape by way of Hell Gate into the Sound, and then to sea."

And on they sped, with their pursuers pressing them hard, and ever and anon sending a six-pound shot after them, from a gun mounted upon a launch, which led the boats and had out eight oars to a side.

At daybreak the pirate's boat, still escaping the shots sent after it, entered New York bay, and headed for the town, a league and a half distant.

Dark and stern Kyd still held the tiller, guiding his boat on, and alternately watching his pursuers, strung out in a long line half a mile astern, and the frowning fort in his front.

At anchor near shore was a small Albany packet, and divining Kyd's intention of throwing himself on board of it, the commander of the expedition fired more rapidly with his six pounder and aroused the town to resistance, while the frightened Dutch skipper spread his huge sail and sped away out of danger.

"Foiled! by the Cross! foiled! pull, ye devils, and we'll cut a craft out yet—hal! there opens the Rondeel; but pull, bounds, pull!" and the eyes of the Devil of the Sea flashed fire, while his face was placid, but stern and determined.

"To the shore, men, and we'll cut our way across the town to the small fishing smacks on the eastern side, and run Hell Gate to the Sound."

Without a murmur, the trained crew obeyed, while around them now pattered the shots from the boats like hail, for the Rondeel dare not fire, seeing the first gun had endangered the lives of the pursuers more than the pirates.

When near the shore the boat ran on a sunken rock, a crash followed, and the crew were hurled into the river; but the daring leader cheered his men.

"Take your cutlasses in your teeth and swim ashore!" he cried, setting the example, and all except one, who could not swim, followed him.

But upon the shore a force was gathering to check them, and as they landed they felt that they must fight to the death, for not twenty lengths away was the launch now.

"Curses upon this wounded arm!" cried Kyd. "I'll tear the false tongue from the throat of that Witch, who said neither steel nor lead could harm me," and with his cutlass in his left hand, he sprang from the water and cut down the first man who opposed him, and who was the commandant of the Rondeel.

"Rally here, devils, and die," he said with reckless determination, as he saw that escape was impossible, and with dogged courage his men obeyed.

"Better steel or lead, than a gallows, lads," he cried almost cheerily, still dealing left-handed but fatal blows.

"Hold! that man is my game; I have run him to cover," and Clement St. Vane sprang from the launch and advanced upon Kyd, who started back, momentarily lowering his cutlass.

"By the Cross! thou art from out thy grave in the sea, St. Vane; but be thou from hell, I'll meet thee," and Kyd sprang forward and the

cutlasses of the two men clashed together; but it was an unequal combat, for the pirate fought with his left hand, he had lost much blood from the wound in his arm, given him by Kate of Belmont.

A few moments of desperate fighting and the cutlass of Kyd was struck from his grasp.

Instantly he drew himself proudly up and said calmly:

"Strike! you have triumphed, Captain St. Vane."

The young captain seemed about to comply, when a slender form darted forward, and with a cry, Kate of Belmont shielded The Kyd with her body, while in piteous tones she pleaded:

"Spare him, St. Vane."

"Ay, I will spare him an honorable death by the sword, that he may die on the gibbet; bear that man to the Rondeel prison, and put him in double irons," answered Clement St. Vane, cut to the heart by the act of Kate of Belmont.

Smiling proudly Kyd was led away, while Lady Kate, in a deep swoon was borne back to the mansion by her father, who now realized how devotedly his daughter loved the man whose crimes had made him a terror on land and sea.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE SECRET OF ZEBEL THE SORCERESS.

IT was the evening after the capture of Kyd, and he stood by the grated window of his cell, looking out upon the moonlit bay.

Suddenly he started, for the iron door swung open, and a woman entered.

"Woman, what want ye here? Were I not ironed hand and foot, I would tear out thy false tongue."

"Kyd, I told thee not, that my amulet would shield thee against lead or steel in woman's hand; ay, and as thou sailed through Hell Gate, coming hither, I warned thee not to come."

"Bah! 'tis not worth a regret; I shall die as I have lived without fear. I am content."

"But I am not; for now that thou art brought to the gallows, I feel that I am guilty of thy blood. I, who should have protected thee."

"You! avaunt thou accursed witch, for protection from thee is like Satan's love."

"No, no, no! do not say that. I hated thee, because I hated thy father; he dragged me down to ruin, and then, for a fairer face deserted me, and hurled me into the sea to die, as he hoped; but no, I was not to die by his hand, so swam on, and on, until at last I reached the shore."

"And then I swore revenge against him, and against you, and I had it, for you killed Hurler of the Red Hand, boy, killed thy father, and I—I—am Gipsy Jule, thy own mother."

"Thou my mother! a fitting son for my father—a fitting son for such a mother: go! come not here again, for I tell thee, woman, even though thou art my mother, rather would I die on the gibbet than own thee."

She shrunk from the withering scorn in his face and tone, and dropping upon her knees held forth her arms pleadingly.

"Go! or, by the God above, I will strike thee with my chains."

She shrunk from him and out of the cell, and fled like a wild woman across the town to her cliff, into which she sprang, and darted back to her lonely isle, alternately shrieking and giving vent to mocking laughter, as she went along over the seething waters, for at last her iron heart was made to feel, and its anguish made her brain burn with madness.

CONCLUSION.

KIND reader, History tells us that Kyd was taken to England, and executed, and died fearlessly, accursed of God and man for the name he left behind him.

And Kate of Belmont faded like a flower day by day, until she died of a broken heart for the fate of him, the only one she had ever loved.

But Lady Grace, though she had also loved The Kyd, bled her wounded heart, kept her secret to herself, and was wooed and won by Clement St. Vane, whose wife she became, one year after the execution of the pirate chief, and their descendants are now to be found on the Jersey shore, for they never returned with the Earl of Belmont to old Castle Cor, as too many painful memories hung around the spot for the young wife to ever be happy there.

As to Zebel, the Sorceress, she long dwelt in her wave-washed retreat, feared by all who knew her; but one day a bold fisherman landing there, found her dead in her cabin, and gave the poor woman a decent burial upon the small island which has ever since borne her name.

In Trinity churchyard, many a moss-grown, crumbling stone bears the name of the worthy dwellers in Nieuwe Amsterdam at that early date, and among them Jos St. Vane, Mynheer Von Bokelen and others; but we of to-day in hurrying by on the crowded street of our magnificent metropolis, never pause to give a thought to the days of nearly two centuries ago, when our ancestors spoke Dutch, smoked long pipes, drank scheitum, and lived in the superstitious terror of spooks and witches, and Captain Kyd of the Black Plume was a rover bold, and won the name of The Devil of the Sea.

THE END.

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